David Strat

DISCOURSES

ON

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS

OF THE GOSPEL.

DELIVERED ON

PUBLIC OCCASIONS:

BY

MICHAEL BOSTON, V. D. M.

Sometime Miniſter of the Proteſtant Diſſenting Congregation in *Alnwick*, NORTHUMBERLAND; and late Miniſter at *Falkirk*.

To which is prefixed,

AN ACCOUNT of the AUTHOR,

BY

The Rev. *WILLIAM CAMPBELL*, A.M.

MINISTER AT DYSART.

I am not aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt, &c. Rom. i. 16.

" Slave to no party,———
" But look'd through nature, up to nature's GOD:
" And knew where faith, law, morals, all began,
" All end,—in love of GOD, and love of men. POPE.

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Daniel Nicoll this book is mine Nov 20 1787

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Page 151. line 4. from the foot, *read* by *instead of* with.
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AN

ACCOUNT

OF

The Rev. Mr. *MICHAEL BOSTON.*

WHEN any of the compoſitions of men of genius and diſtinction are ſent into the world, it is common, for ſuch as were beſt acquainted with them, to give ſome account of them. In compliance with this cuſtom, I hope it will give offence to none, and may be acceptable to ſome, to make a few remarks concerning the author of theſe diſcourſes.—This indeed is a taſk I am not very willing to undertake; but, by a kind of neceſſity, for the preſent, it devolves upon me.

The Rev. Mr MICHAEL BOSTON was born at Etterick Manſe, October 7th, 1745, and died February 5th, 1785.

He was the eldeſt ſon of the Rev. Mr Thomas Boſton, ſometime miniſter ſucceſſively

at Etterick, Oxnam, and Jedburgh; and grandſon of the Rev. Mr Thomas Boſton, late miniſter at Etterick, whoſe fame is in all the churches, for his eminent piety, and many valuable compoſitions; *The Fourfold State of Man,—Treatiſes on the Covenants,—Crook of the Lot,—Body of Divinity*, &c.

If uncommon gifts and diſtinguiſhed talents could be ſuppoſed to deſcend from parents to children, the author of theſe diſcourſes might be expected to have had a conſiderable ſhare. That he was deſcended from godly parents, few I preſume will deny, excepting thoſe who are ſwelled with a wild fanatic ſpirit: And that he was endued by God with very eminent talents, all who knew him will very readily own.

From the firſt dawnings of reaſon he ſhewed an eagerneſs for knowledge, and early diſcovered the fineſt taſte for polite learning. At the grammar-ſchool of Jedburgh, he was the favourite of his maſter, and had the foundation laid of his claſſical learning. When twelve years of age he was, by his maſter, and other good judges, declared fit for the Univerſity.

At the College he was noted for application to his ſtudies, and frequented the company of ſuch who were beſt qualified to improve

prove him in learning, and the knowledge of mankind.

At the age of ſeventeen he wrote a common-place book, which is now in my cuſtody, in a moſt beautiful and maſterly manner. In this performance he gives a clear diſcovery of his knowledge of the languages, of his taſte in ſelecting the choiceſt paſſages from approved authors, and of his extenſive reading, at ſuch an early time of life. When he was eighteen years of age he was recommended by Profeſſor Hamilton at Edinburgh, as one duly qualified for paſſing trials for the miniſtry. The Profeſſor then wrote to his father, ſignifying his high eſteem of him. One expreſſion he uſed may be remarked: "Your ſon ſeems to be a born preacher." His father, it ſeems, on account of his youth, put off his trials till he came to a little more experience.

When prevailed on to allow him to enter on the uſual trials, he quickly went through the ſame, with the unanimous approbation of the preſbytery; and was licenſed to preach the goſpel by the preſbytery of Jedburgh, of the eſtabliſhed church, when he was nineteen years. He preached his firſt ſermon after his licence from James i. 12. "Bleſſed "is the man who endureth temptation," &c.

This

This ſermon is this moment in my hand. After peruſing it a little, I cannot help ſaying, it is more like the compoſition of a man of fifty, than of a youth of nineteen. He appears to have underſtood his ſubject from experience, and ſpeaks of temptation as if he had come through the fiery trial. This brings to my remembrance what I was told and aſſured of ſometime ago concerning him: When but a ſtripling of thirteen, he was admitted firſt a communicant. After partaking of the Lord's ſupper, he retired to ſome ſolitary place among trees, where none but his God might hear him: But there he was overheard, in communion with God, proteſting that the God of his fathers was his God; devoting himſelf wholly unto God; imploring ſupport under all the trials and temptations he had met, or might hereafter meet with; and Jacob like wreſtling for the bleſſing. The perſon who overheard him, I am told, is ſtill living, and declares over and over, that he had got more good to his ſoul by what he heard paſs from Michael Boſton that day in ſolitude, than all the ſermons or work he had been engaged in hearing or witneſſing on that ſolemn occaſion.

After he had made ſome publick appearances as a preacher, his father received many congra-

congratulatory letters from men of worth and eminence, in different places of the kingdom, ſignifying the pleaſing hopes they entertained of a youth of ſuch ſingular talents, and ſo promiſing to be uſeful in the church of Chriſt. It muſt be owned that he enjoyed advantages above many, of acquiring knowledge in the different branches of learning, under the eye of an able and godly father. That he improved theſe advantages to good purpoſe, appeared by his converſation and writings, on different occaſions, on various ſubjects.

I ſhall only here beg leave to preſent the reader with a ſpecimen of his views of religion, as written by himſelf a month or two after he got licence. His words are as follow, *viz.*

" Religion is a word in every body's " mouth, yet few, I am afraid, know what " it means. If they can give you any ac- " count of it at all, 'tis only ſuch an one as " accords with their notions of ſome favou- " rite principles; ſo that different men will " have different anſwers to the queſtion, " What is religion? One man who has been " uſed to eſtimate religion by his favourite " principle, will tell you, that it conſiſts in " the belief of that principle. Another who " has accuſtomed himſelf to conſider religion

" merely

" merely as practical, will tell us, that it con-
" ſiſts in theſe impreſſions which it makes
" on the internal feelings of his heart, influ-
" encing him to do that which he thinks
" right in his life."

" But neither of theſe anſwers will ſatisfy
" the ſcruples of a faſtidious Deiſt; becauſe
" he neither believes the principles of the one,
" nor is he at all acquainted with the heart-
" feelings of the other. He muſt therefore
" have ſome evidence to convince him that
" religion is founded in reaſon.

" Now, that we may underſtand the nature
" of religion, and that the ſervice which God
" requires of us may appear to be a reaſon-
" able ſervice, you will be pleaſed to obſerve,
" That religion is founded,

" *1ſt*, In the very nature and reaſon of
" things. As there is a natural, ſo there
" ſeems to be a moral difference in the na-
" ture of things. In the natural world ſome
" things are black, others white; ſome are
" dark, others light; ſo alſo in the moral
" world, ſome things are good, and others
" bad. As there is a difference betwixt ſick-
" neſs and health, life and death; ſo likewiſe
" ſome things in a moral ſenſe are good, o-
" thers bad; ſome fit, and others unfit. Now,
" upon the eternal and unchangeable differ-

" ence

"ence of things is religion founded. Rea-
"ſon tells us, that we ought not to murder,
"or cheat, or ſteal, or lie: Now, to abſtain
" from theſe evils, and to practiſe their con-
"traries, that is certainly one part of reli-
"gion which is founded on the reaſon and
"nature of things.

"2*d*, Religion is founded in the relation
"which man bears to God. I will explain
"myſelf immediately. God created man
"merely from a principle of goodneſs. He
"preſerves him in being, and liberally pro-
"vides for him from the ſame principle.
" As this is the caſe, the creature is undoubt-
"edly bound, by the laws of his creation,
"to be grateful and obedient to his Creator.
"If a ſubject is bound to obey his ſovereign,
"a ſervant his maſter, and a child his father;
" for the ſame reaſon is man bound to ſerve
"and obey his Maker, becauſe he ſtands in
" theſe relations to him. Now, when a man
" diſcharges the duties that reſult from theſe
" relations he bears to God, that is religion.
" Religion then, you ſee, is truly rational.
" For, let it be conſidered, if a man does me
" any ſingular favour, I certainly owe him
" my moſt grateful acknowledgments. In
" like manner, as all we have is derived
" from the divine bounty, therefore we are

" bound

" bound to be grateful and obedient to God;
" to love and fear, honour and ſerve him:
" And to do ſo, is juſt what we commonly
" call religion.

" I know very well, that in man's preſent
" lapſed ſtate, a ſaving principle of practical
" religion can only be infuſed into the heart
" of man by the faith of the operation of
" God: But then, if we can prove by juſt
" reaſonings, that the principle which the
" Spirit plants in the mind, is founded in the
" reaſon of things, and in the relation we
" bear to God, we thereby ſhew that our re-
" ligious ſervice is a reaſonable ſervice.

" Upon the whole: Religion muſt appear
" to every reaſonable perſon to be a reaſon-
" able thing; and that which is contrary to
" it, is ſubverſive of good ſenſe, and the
" higheſt reaſon.

" The profane, I know, may ſay, that re-
" ligion is the ghaſtly invention of prieſts.
" The witlings of the age may cry out, Prieſt-
" craft! Prieſt-craft! Unbelievers may call
" it an invention of politicians, to procure
" an implicite obedience from the people to
" the arbitrary laws of the ſtate. In ſhort,
" however regardleſs men may be of reli-
" gion, and whatever ſarcaſms they may caſt
" upon it; all that muſt iſſue in their coſt,

" and

" and prove their own ruin: Yet, if we can
" prove, that religion has its foundation in
" reaſon, and add to this revelation alſo, we
" put ſuch men to ſhame; and God himſelf
" will at laſt count the balance, whether
" the man who laughs at religion, or he who
" hath been laught at for religion, has acted
" the wiſeſt or moſt rational part."

Having thus given you, from his own manuſcript, his views of religion when he was but a ſtripling of nineteen; it may be proper, and will come in naturally here, to give the reader a repreſentation of his character of the man of real religion, as written by his own hand, when he was of the ſame age as above noticed. " I am now to deſcribe," ſays the author, " the character of the man of real
" religion, or, in other words, of the righteous
" man, as he is named in the ſcripture."

" Now this character, according to the book
" of God, is made up of three branches, *viz.*

" Righteouſneſs of ſtate;

" Righteouſneſs of nature; and,

" Righteouſneſs of life and converſation.

" 1*ſt*, The firſt branch of this valuable cha-
" racter is, that he is righteous as to his ſtate.

" The eſſential difference betwixt the law
" and the goſpel, lies in the matter of our
" juſtification. In the former, the ſinner was

" to be juſtified by his own righteouſneſs;
" but in the latter, by that of another.

" This doctrine has been exploded by ſome
" as new and novel: but it appears to be as
" old as the ceremonial law, which clearly
" taught and inculcated this doctrine. Ac-
" cording to this law, whenever a perſon had
" ſinned, he was to bring his ſacrifice to the
" prieſt, and to lay his hands upon its head,
" confeſſing his ſins over it; and then the
" guilt was transferred to the ſacrifice, and
" its blood ſhed inſtead of his. This is ex-
" preſly contained in Lev. xvi. 15, and 21.
" Now, it cannot be ſuppoſed that the ſins
" of the children of Iſrael were put into the
" goat, or were inherent in him; but only
" paſſed over, and were put upon the goat.
" Can there be a more expreſſive image of
" our ſins being laid on the great ſacrifice
" Jeſus Chriſt, who was repreſented in all
" theſe ſacrifices? As the ſcape-goat had im-
" puted to him all the iniquities of the peo-
" ple, ſo Chriſt bare all our ſins in his own
" body on the tree. What was prefigured
" by the type was fulfilled by the antetype.
" The ſame way that our ſins were imputed
" to Chriſt, ſo is his righteouſneſs imputed
" to us. He had no ſin of his own, and
" yet he was made ſin by imputation: Be-
" lievers

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" lievers have no righteouſneſs of their own,
" and yet are made righteous by imputation.
" Chriſt had no inherent ſin of his own,
" nor have they any inherent righteouſneſs
" of their own: but he was made ſin by ha-
" ving their ſins imputed to him; and they
" are made righteous by having his righte-
" ouſneſs imputed to them. Now, this de-
" claration, that a believer is righteous, as to
" his ſtate, through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt
" imputed to him by God, and received by
" him by faith, is one eſſential branch of the
" illuſtrious character of a righteous man.

" 2*d*, The righteous man is likewiſe de-
ſcribed in ſcripture as being righteous as to
his nature.

" The firſt branch of his character reſpect-
" ed his juſtification, but this his ſanctifica-
" tion; the one his ſtate, the other his nature.
" Man's heart in a natural ſtate is juſt an
" uncultivated wild, where nothing but the
" ſeeds of ſin can grow. Sin has perverted
" the principles, obſcured the faculties, and
" given a wrong direction to all our views.
" This monſter has unfitted the ſoul for the
" actions and enjoyments of the ſpiritual life.
" Now, to conſtitute the character of the
" righteous man, the perſon muſt undergo
" a change of ſentiment, a change of heart,

" and

" and a change of life. New habits, ſeeds,
" principles and ſentiments of God and good-
" neſs muſt be implanted in him. When
" this is the caſe, the perſon comes to have
" new apprehenſions of God, of Chriſt, of
" ſin, of himſelf, and of ſpiritual things. He
" has new apprehenſions of all the attributes
" of the divine nature. This new view of
" the divine nature ſoon convinces him how
" unfit he is of himſelf to appear before
" the awful preſence of an infinitely holy
" God. This immediately leads him to the
" conſideration of a Mediator. I need, ſays
" he, a days-man betwixt us, who might lay
" his hand upon us both. This conviction
" of the neceſſity of a Mediator, muſt be in
" conſequence of a ſenſe of the malignity of
" ſin, which will be immediately productive
" of a love of and deſire for ſpiritual things:
" ſo that you ſee the ſentiments of the rege-
" nerate ſoul hang in cloſe connection with
" one another. Before, he loved ſin, now he
" lothes it: Before, he was ſlow in God's ſer-
" vice, he is now ſwift in it. All this change
" and happy alteration is effected by, and
" owing unto the power and agency of the
" holy Spirit.

" 3*d*, The laſt ingredient which conſtitutes
" this valuable character of a righteous man,

" is,

" is, That he muſt be righteous as to his life
" and converſation. This is undoubtedly a
" natural conſequence of the two former:
" If there is a change of ſtate and of nature,
" a righteous life will certainly follow. Now,
" this laſt, in connection with the two for-
" mer, compoſe the moſt complete and per-
" fect character of man in this life, that words
" can expreſs or fancy conceive. Try him
" by the two great articles that compriſe the
" whole of man, *viz.* His duty to his God,
" and his neighbour; and you will find him
" righteous towards them both. He is diſ-
" poſed to pay juſt and rightful tribute to
" his Creator, and deſires to with-hold from
" him nothing that is due. Equally juſt is
" he towards his neighbour. As he makes
" conſcience of the duties of religion, ſo does
" he of thoſe of morality. He is not only
" convinced of the equity and propriety of
" that golden rule of righteouſneſs, but he
" puts it in practice. He does to others as
" he would chuſe others to do to him. In
" all his commerce with mankind he is juſt
" and equitable. He is a ſtranger to the low
" fraudulent arts of aggrandizing his own
" intereſt at the expence of another's. He
" does not ſatisfy himſelf by doing no harm
" to his fellow men, but exerts himſelf to

" do

" do them good. His own intereſt and that " of his neighbour's hang in an equal ba- " lance. Noble character indeed!"

I ſhall now proceed in my account of the author.

A few months after he got licence, he was called to be miniſter of the Proteſtant congregation at Alnwick in Northumberland, and was ordained paſtor of that congregation 29th of October 1765. On which day he delivered publicly the following confeſſion of his faith, which I lay before you as written by himſelf, in a ſmall octavo ſheet, which follows, *viz.*

" Confeſſion of Faith delivered at his " Ordination, October 29th 1765, by " MICHAEL BOSTON.

" Antiquity gives its ſanction to the lau- " dable cuſtom of requiring creeds or con- " feſſions of faith from candidates for the " holy miniſtry, previous to their inſtallation " into that office. Senſible therefore that " this is a thing no ways inconſiſtent with " the natural rights of mankind, nor with " that liberty wherewith Chriſt hath ſet us " free, I readily comply with it; and the

" following

" following I deliver as the articles of my " faith.

" ART. I. Since ſomething now is, 'tis evi- " dent that ſomething always was; for there " can be no effects without a cauſe. It fol- " lows therefore, that they have derived their " origin from ſomething elſe, and that ſome- " thing elſe, from ſomething more remote, " till at length we arrive at a cauſe which " hath never begun to be, conſequently ne- " ceſſarily exiſtent, and which we call by the " venerable name of GOD. All the parts of " the univerſe produced by this uncauſed " cauſe, having in them the ſtrongeſt ſigna- " tures of wiſdom and power, I cannot but " conclude, that this being muſt be all-wiſe, " all-powerful, omniſcient, and omnipreſent.

" II. By a native conſequence from the " exiſtence of the Deity, I conclude, that if " a Being exiſts who created all nature, he " muſt likewiſe rule and govern it by his " wiſdom and power. The light of nature " likewiſe intimates ſomething to us of the " univerſality of this providence; that as the " minuteſt things are the ſubject of his cre- " ative power, as well as the moſt important, " ſo they muſt likewiſe be the ſubject of his " governing providence. It likewiſe leads " us to conclude, that as we feel a principle

" within

" within us which thinks, reaſons, and wills,
" it muſt conſequently be diſtinct from mat-
" ter, and capable of exiſting, when the bo-
" dy, its preſent reſidence, is diſſolved. That
" this principle is rewarded or puniſhed ac-
" cording to its demerit, in another life, is
" not entirely excluded from the intimations
" of the light of reaſon.

" III. But the ignorance and error that has
" over-run this and former ages convince me,
" that the light of nature is inſufficient to
" guide man in his reſearches after God, and
" after the duty he owes to him; and there-
" fore it follows, that a ſatisfactory know-
" ledge of theſe particulars can only be ob-
" tained in conſequence of a revelation from
" God. Loſt therefore in our purſuit of hap-
" pineſs, God, out of pure mercy, granted
" this revelation to us, which is contained
" in thoſe antient writings of the Old and
" New Teſtament; the divinity and authenti-
" city of which records is ſufficiently proved
" to us by numerous beneficent well-atteſted
" miracles, and the prophecies contained in
" them, many of which we have ſeen exactly
" fulfilled.

" IV. This revelation informs us, that God
" created our firſt parent Adam out of the
" duſt of the ground, with an underſtanding

" free

" free from error, that he entered into a co-
" venant with him as our federal head and
" repreſentative, and that, upon condition of
" his fulfilling the terms of this covenant,
" he promiſed him, and in him all his poſ-
" terity, immortal life and happineſs; and
" threatned, in caſe of diſobedience, to inflict
" death on all his deſcendents as well as him-
" ſelf. It farther informs us, that though
" Adam was perfectly capable of performing
" the conditions of this covenant, yet through
" the abuſe of the freedom of his will, and by
" the inſtigations and ſuggeſtions of the devil,
" he failed in his duty, and broke his engage-
" ments: in conſequence of this, as all man-
" kind were included in this covenant, ſo they
" were expoſed to the direful effects of its
" breach. By this fall, the faculties of his
" ſoul, which were pure and uncorrupted, are
" obſcured; his underſtanding darkened; his
" will, which was upright, is perverted; and
" the affections of his ſoul have got a wrong
" tendency and direction. The guilt perſon-
" ally contracted by Adam devolves upon his
" poſterity, in conſequence of their repreſen-
" tation by him. As upon Adam's keeping the
" covenant, they were to inherit eternal life;
" ſo now, as it is violated, they have for-
" feited their claim to life and happineſs.

" V. Matters being at this paſs; man un-
" able to extricate himſelf from the effects
" of the fall, the ſcriptures inform us, that
" God, out of pure love and mercy, vouch-
" ſafed to employ his wiſdom in contriving
" a ſcheme for man's recovery. As it was
" neceſſary that this ſcheme ſhould ſhew his
" juſtice, and diſplay his mercy, he propo-
" ſes it to his Son, as the only proper perſon
" to be man's ſurety and covenant-head.
" To this benevolent ſcheme, moved with
" compaſſion, the Son readily conſented.
" Of the character of this Redeemer, the
" ſcriptures give us the cleareſt deſcription:
" They inform us, that he was God, in all
" things equal with the Father; but that as
" he was to ſave that which was loſt, it was
" neceſſary, to accompliſh this arduous taſk,
" that he ſhould aſſume the human nature
" in conjunction with the divine: this they
" aſſure us he actually did. He ſubjected
" himſelf to the law, he yielded obedience
" to its precepts, he fully ſatisfied the de-
" mands of offended juſtice; he died; he roſe
" again; by which he conquered all our e-
" nemies, triumphed over principalities and
" powers, and wrought out complete redemp-
" tion for his people. In conſequence of this,
" the ſubjects of his purchaſe enjoy many
" benefits

" benefits and privileges. Their perſons are " juſtified, and, together with their ſervices, " are accepted as righteous in God's ſight; " their natures are ſanctified and made holy; " they are effectually called; they are made " branches of the true Vine; and adopted in- " to the number of God's children, and have " a right to all their privileges: They are " made heirs of eternal life, and inheritors " of uninterrupted happineſs through Jeſus " Chriſt their Lord. Theſe are the grand out- " lines of the Chriſtian religion; and whatever " other articles it teaches, are either com- " prehended under, or follow by a natural " conſequence from ſome one or other of " theſe. Theſe truths I believe; and I ought, " and intend through grace, to make them " the ſubjects of my public diſcourſes, as " well as private inſtructions. And, while " I conclude, I muſt beg the favour of this " congregation, as a debt they owe to their " ſouls, that I may be included in their ad- " dreſſes to God, to be enabled faithfully to " diſcharge the important truſt now to be " committed to my charge."

On the Lord's day following, being the third of November, he was introduced to his pulpit by his father, who preached in the forenoon of that day. In the afternoon he

preached

preached himſelf his firſt ſermon after his ordination, from Rom. i. 16. "I am not "aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt," &c.

In diſcourſing from this text he propoſed,

I. Not to be aſhamed of the goſpel, to believe it as a man.

II. Not to be aſhamed to profeſs it as a Chriſtian.

III. Not to be aſhamed to preach it as a miniſter.

IV. Not to be aſhamed to contend and fight for it as a ſoldier.

V. Not to be aſhamed to die for it as a martyr.

In the cloſe of his diſcourſe, he addreſſed his people. He obteſted them, on their part, not to be aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt. He exhorted them to give all diligence to underſtand its doctrines, and practiſe the duties it enjoins. "Take," ſays he, "Paul for "your example. Value the goſpel, as he "did. Believe it as he did. Practiſe it as "he did. The more you do ſo, the more "you will eſteem and love it. The excel-"lencies of the goſpel will appear greater, in "proportion to the knowledge you have of "it.

"Conſider yourſelves as bound, by God "and conſcience, to attend punctually on "the

" the ordinances and inſtitutions of the go-
" ſpel. The more regard you pay to theſe,
" the more comfort you will have, I aſſure
" you: And, which is far better, the more
" glory will redound to your God and Sa-
" viour.

" Beware of diſhonouring the goſpel by
" your wicked lives. The goſpel is a doc-
" trine according to godlineſs. Let not your
" lives contradict its intentions. Do not mix
" the religion of Jeſus with lying and ſlan-
" dering. Do not interline your lives with
" religion and ſin; with, what you may call
" devotion, and ſhameful luſts. Theſe things
" are incompatible in the order of the God
" of nature, and in the revealed religion of
" Jeſus Chriſt. Be all exhorted to unity and
" love with one another. The deſign of the
" goſpel was not to ſet men by the ears, or
" to make them bite and devour one another.
" It was intended to reconcile their divided
" hearts. If we were to examine the lives
" of many profeſſors of Chriſtianity, and
" judge of their religion by their lives, I am
" afraid, we would naturally conclude the
" goſpel was deſigned to ſet men at daggers
" drawing with one another. Let not there-
" fore the merciful deſign of the goſpel be
" perverted on your account. The brotherly

" love

"love that ſubſiſted among the primitive "Chriſtians, convinced many of the Hea-"thens of the divinity of Chriſt's religion. "This brotherly love will now have the "ſame effect with ſome. It may ſtop the " mouth of the blaſphemous infidel; where-"as quarrels and factions will diſguſt him "at your religion. The rage of a bitter and "unſanctified zeal will convince him of the "uncharitableneſs of your temper. On the "contrary, unanimity and good agreement "will have a tendency to perſuade him that "you do not make the leſſer circumſtances "and appendages of your religion the ſub-"ject of conteſt and party ſtrife. May the "bleſſed Spirit of peace bring us all to "this happy unity of heart, to a life corre-"ſponding thereunto, till we arrive at the "manſions above, where peace and harmo-"ny for ever reign."——Thus ſpake our author.

But to return to our account of him.

The firſt time he diſpenſed the Lord's ſupper in his congregation, his father was his aſſiſtant. He heard his ſon go through the work of the day with much ſatisfaction; and when going out to cloſe the work in the evening, was heard ſay, "That boy fills me with "aſtoniſh-

"aſtoniſhment," meaning his ſon; "I am a-
"ſhamed to go and ſpeak after him."

On all public occaſions he diſcovered the fineſt taſte for elegance and neatneſs of compoſition. He ſpake with the ſame eaſe, beauty, and force, as if oratory had been the peculiar gift of nature to him; or, as if it had been his ſtudy through his whole life. One thing he ſeemed invariably to obſerve as a rule in all his diſcourſes, not to introduce into his ſubject extraneous matter, or things foreign to the purpoſe, which often tend to waſte the time, and confound the judgement of the audience. He adhered cloſely to the point in queſtion, and confined himſelf to ſuch topics only as tended to illuſtrate and confirm it.

He was never known, in the moſt diſtant manner, to exalt himſelf above any perſon, far leſs above any of his brethren. Detraction he abhorred. To reſent an injury, he had not the moſt remote inclination. He quickly diſcerned when wrong was done to him, but never could any ſee him diſpoſed to retaliate. Modeſty and ſelf-diffidence he highly eſteemed in every perſon; but arrogance and ſelf-conceit he had a particular averſion at. He was never known to do or ſay an unkind thing of any one; and if, at any time,

others

others treated him not ſo genteelly, he bore it with a manly meekneſs, and let it paſs with a ſmile or a jeſt.

He quickly diſcovered the accompliſhments of others, but ſeemed to be wholly denied to his own. That which is the common fault of little minds, to build up their own reputation on the ruin of that of another, he deteſted and abhorred. Popular applauſe he ſtudiouſly avoided, and had no deſire of being called of men Rabboni.

He often ſaid to his neareſt relations, He wiſhed to make as little appearance in the world as poſſible, and deſired to paſs through it unobſerved. Renowned fame, and a great name among men, he ever thought were among the vanities unworthy of ſeeking after. When he noticed any of his brethren courting the praiſe of men, he was ſure to make merry with them, and ſeldom failed of ſucceſs, in bringing them to laugh with him at the ſilly vanity.

An affected ſhow and noiſe, in religious matters, he much diſliked. Phariſaical diſtortions of the countenance, and a deſire of being thought religious among men, he could never endure. Theſe things make up ſo great a part of the garb of the hypocrite, that he thought every man of good ſenſe, who

wiſhed

wiſhed well to the intereſt of religion, ſhould ſtudy to keep at a proper diſtance from them. His own practice was perfectly conſiſtent with his ſentiments in this particular.

With Chriſtian zeal and manly courage he appeared in defence of the religion of Jeſus: But every diſcerning perſon could ſee, all the while, it was by no means himſelf, but Jeſus Chriſt and his goſpel, he laboured to commend unto the people for their ſalvation.

His uncommon ſweetneſs of temper, and facetious diſpoſition, made him particularly agreeable in all companies, and gained him many admirers. He waited with a kind of eager impatience to hear what any perſon had to advance, and his remarks were pleaſant and informing.

His knowledge of the different branches of learning, joined to his natural quickneſs of perception, made his company entertaining and inſtructing to all who had any inclination to improve. What was ſaid of one not many years ago, may, with juſtice, be applied to him: "His learning was very ex-
"tenſive. God gave him a great and an un-
"derſtanding mind; a quick apprehenſion,
"and a ſolid judgement."

His talents, as a public ſpeaker, were very

eminent. His reaſoning was forcible. His expreſſion diſtinct, and his manner moſt commanding and engaging. He had a particular gift of reaſoning in the way of analogy; and, in a dextrous way peculiar to himſelf, explained ſpiritual things by metaphors and images brought from the works of the God of nature. Perſpicuity, which is eſſentially neceſſary to good compoſition, adorned all his diſcourſes. He had a ſingular eaſe and facility of expreſſion. He arranged his ſubject in ſuch a beautiful and natural order, as was moſt excellently calculated to ſtrike the imagination, and convince the judgement. This happy art of methodizing his argument; this *lucidus ordo*, as Horace calls it, made every ſubject he handled clear to the underſtanding, eaſy to the memory, and agreeable to the affections.

I ſhall here ſtate verbatim the account given of him in the Edinburgh Advertiſer of February 8th, 1785, by an unknown hand, at leaſt to me unknown: "On Saturday the "5th current, died at Falkirk, much and "juſtly regreted, the Rev. Mr. MICHAEL "BOSTON, miniſter there. A gentleman "who, beſides his great profeſſional abilities, "poſſeſſed an extenſive knowledge of men "and human affairs;---was well acquainted

"with

" with the knowledge of the ſtate of the
" world in general;---was particularly ver-
" ſant with the hiſtory and conſtitution of
" his own country;--was bleſt with the ut-
" moſt liberality of ſentiment;--entertained
" conſequently, a contemptible idea of illi-
" beral and narrow-minded bigots:---Was
" abhorrent of party-ſpirit in church or ſtate;
" and was truly an Enthuſiaſt for, what
" ſhould be the darling of human kind, RE-
" LIGIOUS and CIVIL LIBERTY."

But it happened to him, as it often doth to others in the ſame circumſtances; great talents and diſtinguiſhed abilities raiſed the envy and ill-nature of not a few. So capricious often are the tempers of men, they are diſpoſed to find blemiſhes in the moſt exalted and valuable characters. Fond to have all excellencies confined to themſelves, they are quite uneaſy to hear theſe aſcribed to others, which, in their opinion, are far more brilliant in themſelves. Such an unhappy temper was as far diſtant from the author of theſe diſcourſes, as the ſouth is from the north pole. He told me once himſelf, when he heard of one who ſaid ſome things not ſo friendly of him, " Go," ſaid he, to the perſon who told him, " and inform the gentle-
" man, he may ſay of me what he pleaſes;
" but

" but I am convinced any thing he can ſay " or do, ſhall give me as little uneaſineſs as " the fly, in the fable, gave to the bull when " it ſat on his horn." And, I am perſuaded, if he was now to ſee any ill-natured critic quarrelling with any of his remains, he would be diſpoſed to ſay, " Father, forgive them."

I am well aware, ſome may think, and others may raiſe a loud cry, " He hath ſaid " too much! by far too much! eſpecially " conſidering his near connection with the " author." I ſhall only ſay in anſwer, for the preſent, I have ſaid nothing but what I, in part, knew myſelf; and other facts have been authenticated from the moſt undoubted evidence. Being therefore convinced of the truth, I was under a neceſſity to relate facts as I have done, or ſay nothing at all. What is here narrated, is only a tribute due to truth, and a piece of common juſtice I owe to the memory of a departed friend. Not to be diſpoſed to impugn the excellencies of others, is an evidence of a benevolent heart: To adore and thank the great Giver of ſuch admirable talents to any of the ſons of men, is a clear diſcovery of a Chriſtian temper: And to imitate in our practice what is praiſe-worthy in any of our fellow mortals, is the beſt uſe we can make of what has been found

valuable

valuable in them. So we read from the Spirit of inſpiration, "Be ye followers of them who "through faith and patience inherit the pro-"miſes."

It is no ways meant here to lay down a model of imitation in every caſe:—far—very far from it. An apoſtle could only ſay, "Be "ye followers of me, as I alſo am of Chriſt." Only in ſo far, as if he had ſaid, As I am a follower of Chriſt do you follow me: And in no other reſpects are we to follow any mere man. Who is ſo ignorant as not to know that many ſad weakneſſes, follies, ſins, yea (to men) appearing contradictions, are diſcernible in the lives of the beſt of men on earth? But are we, becauſe of theſe, totally to overlook or undervalue their excellencies? This would be unkind, not to ſay unchriſtian; yea, to do ſo would, in effect, oblige us to lay aſide the uſe of the exhortation altogether, "Be ye followers of them," &c.

An indifference, in the author, about the things of a preſent world; the want of heart, or, I may call it, a diſinclination, to look over the affairs of his houſehold, involved him in many difficulties, which bore hard on him in the latter part of his life.

For ſeveral years he was ſore afflicted with the rheumatiſm; to remove which, all attempts

tempts of phyſicians proved abortive. At length the diſeaſe rendered him quite feeble in his limbs. To walk abroad was painful to him. Loaded with many infirmities, he plyed his miniſterial work to the laſt. Not many days before he died, he was ſupported to the church, where he preached to his people, as I was repeatedly told, with his uſual vigor, in all human appearance. After this he retired to his ſolitary home. In a few days he turned worſe and worſe. The night before his death he ſaid to one of his friends ſtanding by him, to this purport; and, if I remember the words as they were told me, they were ſuch as theſe: "I am dying! and "oh! remember, there is no hope of ſalvation "for poor ſinners, but in Jeſus Chriſt alone." This was a good ſermon to me, when I heard it; and ſtill is a ſweet ſermon, as it came from a dying friend, becauſe the holy Spirit of God hath ſaid, "Neither is there ſalvation "in any other," Acts iv. 12. Next morning he called for a drink; then he deſired to be up; a few minutes after, to be in bed; when he ſlept, we hope, in JESUS.

On Sabbath forenoon, the 6th of February, 1785, when I was juſt about going out to my public work, a meſſage came with the melancholy

melancholy account of my dear brother's death. As we had heard nothing in particular of his extraordinary diſtreſs, we were all ſtruck with a kind of ſtupor. Death, to be ſure, however much we are on our guard, always gives an alarm.

Now that he hath left this world of vanity and tears, the laſt of the male line of the BOSTON FAMILY, it is natural for ſurviving friends, and ſuch as received benefit from his miniſterial labours; it is natural, I ſay, for ſuch to deſire to have ſome of the fruits of his ſtudy ſent into the world, which they and others may have the opportunity of peruſing for their inſtruction and edification.

It is chiefly with a view to this, and becauſe it ſeems to have been the author's own intention to publiſh theſe diſcourſes, had he lived, that theſe are now offered to the public.

It hath been thought proper by ſome to reviſe theſe diſcourſes before they were ſent into the world. But, on ſecond reflection, it is judged more proper to allow them to go in their original form, juſt as they dropt from the author's pen. In their native dreſs, in which they now appear, ſome of the ſtrictures of the genius and character of the

ſcholar

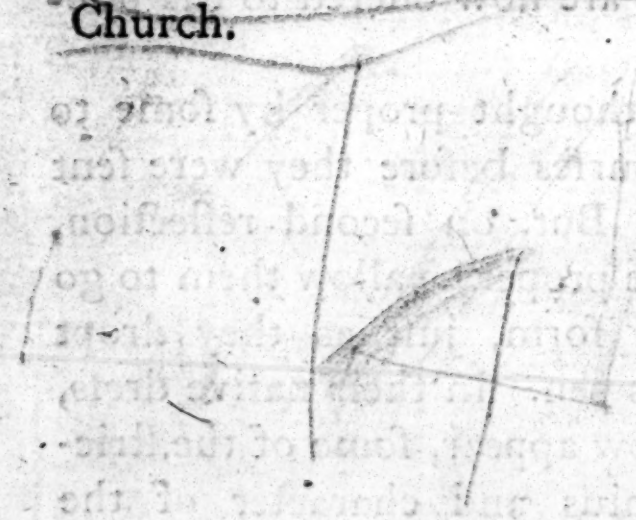
ſcholar and the rhetorician, the Chriſtian and the divine, may be ſeen.

The grandfather of the author died, aged 56. His father died, aged 52. And the author himſelf died in the 39 $\frac{4}{12}$ of his age.

In relation to them all, I was juſt going to adopt the words of a Latin poet: But to avoid pedantry and ambiguity, I give the meaning in plain Engliſh:

"To manhood full they reach'd, but little more;
"When death took Father, Sire, and Son away.
"This was the doing of JEHOVAH's hand.
"They learn'd ſubmiſſion to his will.
"And cheerfully obey'd."

The corps of the Author lie interred in the ſouth-eaſt corner of the church-yard of Falkirk, within a few feet of the walls of the Church.



THE

THE PREFACE

By the PUBLISHERS.

THE Public may reſt aſſured of it, that theſe diſcourſes are the genuine works of the late Rev. Author, whoſe name they bear. They are printed from his own manuſcript, without variation of one ſentence, ſo far as we can recollect. Some few words indeed are ſupplied, where the meaning required it.

When delivered by the author, they met with the approbation of ſome of the beſt judges of compoſitions of this kind. They will no doubt be found to labour under the diſadvantages uſually attending poſthumous pieces, which have not been finiſhed for the preſs by the author. However, we would fondly flatter ourſelves, the candid and ſerious reader will here find ſome of the great and important truths of the goſpel opened up and applied, with perſpicuity, force, and elegance.

A liberal and generous ſpirit was one diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of the author, and is very apparent in theſe diſcourſes. All of the ſubjects ſeem to be calculated to anſwer the ends of ſpiritual edification. Many knowing Chriſtians, who heard them from the pulpit with much ſatisfaction, have ſignified their earneſt deſire to have them publiſhed, that they might have an opportunity of peruſing them in their families and cloſets.

That God, by his bleſſing, may make them ſerve the purpoſe of godly edification, is the unfeigned prayer of the publiſhers.

David Nicoll his book is mine Feb 20 1781

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE I.

The NECESSITY of a CONCERN about our SALVATION.

Acts xvi. 30. ——*Sirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved?*

THIS chapter contains the hiſtory of an incident extraordinary in its nature, and memorable in its effects. An incident in which the greatneſs of God's power was not more illuſtriouſly diſplayed, than the riches of his grace glorioufly manifeſted.

During the ſtay of Paul and Silas at Philippi, a town of Macedonia, a young woman who, by the influence of an evil ſpirit, pretended a power of predicting future events, was obſerved for ſeveral days to follow the apoſtles, always repeating the following words, "Theſe men are the ſervants of the "moſt high God, who ſhew unto us the way of "ſalvation." Paul either ſuſpecting that the young woman did this with no good views; or apprehending that the affair might, in the end, turn out to the diſcredit of religion, thought

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thought proper, by the exertion of that power with which he was endued by God, to diſpoſſeſs the evil ſpirit. The people, who employed the girl, enraged on account of their loſing the profits and emoluments of her pretended art, ſeized the apoſtles, carried them before the magiſtrates, and complained that they had thrown the whole city into confuſion. The magiſtrates, without making any inquiry into the grounds of the complaint, immediately order the apoſtles to be whipped through the ſtreets, and thrown into priſon, laying, at the ſame time, the ſtricteſt injunctions upon the Jailor to keep them in cloſe confinement. Though their impriſonment hindered them from propagating their Maſter's faith, yet it did not abate their fervour of ſpirit, or prevent their praying and ſinging praiſes to God. While thus employed in theſe devotional exerciſes, a ſhock of an earthquake was felt, which ſhook the foundations of the priſon. The keeper of the priſon awaked out of his ſleep by this ſtrange phenomenon, obſerving the doors of the ſeveral apartments open, and ſuſpecting that the priſoners had made their eſcape, was ſo fearful of the conſequences to himſelf, that he immediately drew his ſword, and threatened to put an end to his life.

Paul

Paul obſerved this, and knowing very well that the poor man was driven to this extremity through fear of the reſentment of the magiſtrates for the eſcape of the priſoners, ſeaſonably prevented the execution of his deſperate reſolution, by crying with a loud voice, "Do thyſelf no harm, for we are all "here."

The Jailor, doubly aſtoniſhed at the wonderful concurrence of circumſtances, inſtantly ſprung in, and proſtrating himſelf before the two apoſtles, after bringing them out of the priſon, with great concern of ſoul, aſks them this queſtion, "What ſhall I do?" &c.

This is a ſhort narrative of the facts that gave riſe to our text. And before we proceed any farther, it may be neceſſary to make the two following obſervations, which naturally occur to us upon reading this ſhort, but eventful hiſtory.

Firſt, When the Jailor, upon awaking from ſleep at midnight, obſerved the doors of all the apartments, where his priſoners were confined, thrown wide open, he, naturally ſuſpecting that, availing themſelves of that favourable opportunity, they had made their eſcape, reſolved to ſtab himſelf.

This deſperate reſolution will be very eaſily accounted for, when it is conſidered, that by

by the Roman law the keeper of a priſon was obliged to ſuffer the puniſhment that was to have been inflicted upon ſuch priſoners as make their eſcape whilſt in his cuſtody. Now, it is very probable, that this Jailor had ſome offenders in his cuſtody that were condemned to death, or, perhaps, he apprehended that Paul and Silas would be condemned and puniſhed as ſeditious men, and diſturbers of the ſtate: To avoid therefore a more cruel or ignominious death, he was determined, by his own arm, to put a period to his life.

Secondly, We obſerve, That he was ſeaſonably hindered from executing his deſperate purpoſe, by Paul telling that none of the priſoners had made their eſcape. This had an amazing effect upon the man. Inſtead of killing himſelf, his chief concern was about his ſoul, and with the deepeſt emotion of ſoul, cries out, "What ſhall I do?" &c. The tranſition here, from a ſtate of diſtraction, to true converſion, is very ſudden and extraordinary; and a curſory reader would be very much at a loſs to account for this ſudden change wrought upon the Jailor, becauſe there would not appear to him any cauſes or inſtruments of it.

But any man who thinks, whilſt he reads the hiſtory, will eaſily ſee that the following circumſtances

circumſtances were the means of effecting this ſudden and inſtantaneous change in him. He obſerved the doors all open, and the chains and fetters of the priſoners knocked off. This he knew could not be effected either by deceit or art; and he immediately concluded, that it was done by a miraculous exertion of the divine power.

We may alſo ſuppoſe, that his reflections upon the haſtineſs of his reſolution to murder himſelf, before he ſo much as knew whether the priſoners had made their eſcape, contributed to produce the ſudden change.

Now, the amount of the whole is this: God was graciouſly pleaſed at this time ſo to affect the heart of this poor man, by the miracles which he worked in opening the doors, and looſening the chains of the priſoners, that he immediately became heartily concerned for the eternal welfare of his ſoul. We are now therefore to look upon this man as a true convert; and here we may behold a trophy of divine grace. The dread of the priſoners making their eſcape, put the poor man upon a reſolution of murdering himſelf, and the miracle ſo ſeaſonably worked, filled him with concern for his ſoul. Behold then, my brethren, a glorious atchievement of all-conquering grace; a ſinner juſt about to plunge

himſelf

himſelf into hell and miſery, by ſelf-murder, ſnatched, in a moment, from this perilous ſituation, and joined to God. This is the doing of the Lord; this is the power of energetic grace, and ſhould be wondrous in our eyes.

In diſcourſing upon this ſubject, I ſhall,

I. Enquire how this concern for its ſalvation is excited and produced in the ſoul.

II. Shew that this concern for our eternal intereſt is eſſentially neceſſary to ſalvation.

III. Lead you to ſome improvement; with an addreſs to communicants.

And, while we turn our thoughts to a ſubject ſo important in its nature, and ſo ſuitable to the purpoſe of our meeting together this day, May that powerful grace, which converted this man, fill our mouths with this queſtion, "What ſhall I do to be ſaved?"

I. How is this concern for its ſalvation excited in the ſoul?

The ſending of the Spirit is the great and capital promiſe of the new teſtament, and his office

office when he comes, is to teach us all things. We cannot therefore doubt, that it is by his energy and influence that ſinners are excited to a concern for their eternal intereſt.

But though this be a point undiſputed, yet ſtill the great queſtion remains to be anſwered, *viz.* How, and in what manner the Spirit firſt produces in a ſinner's heart this concern for his ſoul?

The difference of opinion concerning the proper anſwer to this queſtion, is occaſioned by a ſuppoſition, that the Spirit is confined to one particular method of operation upon mens hearts. Now, though the Spirit muſt operate upon ſinners in a way that is agreeable to the conſtitution of human nature, and conſiſtent with that freedom of the will, which is reckoned eſſential to virtue and vice; yet, to reſtrict the Spirit to one particular method of effecting his purpoſes upon ſinners, is both inconſiſtent with the ſcriptural account of his nature and his operations: For we are expreſsly told, that as he diſpenſes divers gifts to ſinners, he alſo does this by divers operations upon their hearts. This is alſo evident from a variety of facts recorded in the goſpel hiſtory. Some were converted by a word ſpoken by Chriſt, others by hearing his heavenly diſcourſes, and o-

thers by ſeeing him work his convincing miracles, and ſome alſo by a new, though ſecret repreſentation of divine things to their underſtandings. It may indeed be objected, that in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity, God, for the manifeſtation of his glory, and the conviction of unbelievers, converted ſinners miraculouſly, and by methods altogether ſupernatural. But though this may be the truth, that we are not to judge of the Spirit's manner of converting ſinners in the latter ages of the church, by the methods uſed for that purpoſe in the firſt ages of it; yet it is abundantly obvious from the examples produced, that the Spirit is not to be confined to one particular method of producing ſanctification in the ſinner's ſoul.

Waving therefore any bewildering diſputes about this point, I ſhall only obſerve, that we may always be certain, that whenever a ſinner is awakened to a ſerious concern for his immortal intereſt, the Spirit has previous thereto infuſed light into his underſtanding, enabling him to perceive the excellency of goſpel truths, and inſerted into his will a new principle of life or action, by which he is enabled to act agreeably to theſe truths.

It muſt be acknowledged, that the Spirit does this by various methods, which we will

not

not preſume to define: But, at the ſame time, it muſt alſo be allowed, that the infuſion of this principle into the mind, is eſſentially neceſſary to the producing in the ſinner a concern for his ſoul. For, as every ſinner is unacquainted with his own heart and ſtate, he thinks that by his ſincerity, and works of charity, he will procure his acceptance with God. He is ignorant alſo of the extent and ſpirituality of the divine law, which contributes greatly to confirm him in his miſtaken opinion of himſelf and his ſtate. Every ſinner reaſons with himſelf thus: "I never com-
"mitted adultery or fornication: I never
"was guilty of theft or murder: I never
"worſhipped any other God but him who
"made heaven and earth: I have always
"been careful to give every man his due;
"and, according to my ability, relieved the
"poor and the indigent." In the firm belief of all this, the ſinner concludes that his ſalvation is ſecured, and that he has nothing to fear from the wrath of God. But when the Spirit infuſes into his mind the ſeeds and habits of grace, he receives new light, and immediately changes his views of himſelf and divine things. He now ſees that the law of God, broken by our original parents, has ſtill ſuch demands upon ſinners, as they, in

their preſent ſtate, are unable to anſwer. The man now wonders at his own ſtrange infatuation, and is ſurprized when he reflects that he has deluded himſelf with ſuch deceitful hopes. He is now convinced that he is a ſinner in God's ſight, condemned by his law, and abſolutely unable to yield that obedience to it which it requires. Now, as a man convinced of his danger, is anxious to be freed from it; ſo, a ſinner convinced of guilt by the Spirit, and made ſavingly acquainted with his hazardous ſtate, can have no reſt, no tranquillity of ſoul, until he finds out the way of eſcape.

Inſtead of that haughty and ſupercilious language which formerly filled his mouth, he now breaks out in ſuch humble ſtrains as theſe: "What infatuation have I been ſeized "with? I thought, becauſe my life was to-"lerably regular, and my profeſſion decent, "that my ſalvation was ſecured, and my "happineſs infallible: But now I ſee my "folly; the wrath of God, I find, has been "hanging over my head: I have been a "ſtranger to God and goodneſs, while I "fooliſhly thought that all was well with "me. O my ſoul! what injuſtice have I "done thee? What now muſt I do? Shall "I go to my innocence? No; this is a vain

"hope.

"hope. Shall I depend upon my righteouſ-
"neſs? I cannot reſt here neither, becauſe
"it is only as filthy rags. What then ſhall
"I do for thee, my poor ſoul? I will fly to
"the blood of ſprinkling. O Son of God,
"take me under thy protection? Saviour of
"mankind, hide me under the ſhadow of
"thy wings! O compaſſionate Redeemer,
"pour thy precious blood into my wounded
"heart? Dear Jeſus, Lord of glory, ſave
"me, or I periſh!"

Theſe remarks will let you ſee, that it is by the Spirit's influence upon ſinners hearts, that they are excited to a concern for their ſalvation; and will ſhew you alſo (as far as we ought to know) how the Spirit produces in the heart this concern for its happineſs.

Having dwelt ſo long upon this part of the ſubject, time will only permit me to make a few remarks on the ſecond head, which was,

II. To ſhew that this concern for our eternal intereſt is eſſentially neceſſary to ſalvation.

This is ſo very obvious in itſelf, that it requires no proof. A man who is not hungry, will not readily have any deſire for food; a man who is not weary, will not ſeek after reſt; and a man who is not ſenſible that he

is

is ſick, will never apply to the phyſician: So alſo, in a religious ſenſe, a ſinner who is not ſenſible of his want and need of happineſs, will never ſeek after it; nor will ever a man who has no concern for his ſalvation, give himſelf any trouble about it. It is obvious then, that this concern for our ſalvation is eſſentially neceſſary to it.

A great many people think, that they have abundance of concern for their ſalvation, if they read the Bible ſometimes, and give attendance upon divine ſervice: But alas! my brethren, this is only a dead inactive concern which will do nothing at all for you. Suppoſe that a man whilſt his houſe was on flames ſhould ſtand very gravely, and hear a perſon give a lecture upon the neceſſity of trying to extinguiſh the flames immediately, and yet at the ſame time never offer to put a hand to his houſe, what would be the conſequence of this? Surely, that the man's houſe, and all his effects, would periſh in the flames. Now, apply this to your own caſe, and you will ſee its abſurdity. You come to God's ordinances, and hear his ſervants tell you the neceſſity of repentance, and the dangerous conſequence of living and dying in ſin. Now, do you think, that the ſimple hearing theſe things from the mouth of a preacher will

ſave

ſave you? Not at all. You muſt ariſe, and be going; you muſt repent and believe the goſpel, or your end will be like that of the man's houſe; God will burn up your ſouls in fire unquenchable through all eternity.

You muſt not then imagine, that an inactive concern for your ſalvation will avail any thing; it muſt be ſuch a concern as will ſpur you on to action, and animate you to fly from the wrath to come. If an only ſon, or a favourite child, was ſeized with a dangerous and acute diſeaſe, every perſon would reckon you fooliſh if you ſhould ſit down, and ſay it is our duty to uſe means, we muſt apply for advice; and yet, at the ſame time, never ſend for the phyſician. Equally abſurd is it, for a profeſſor of religion to own, that the ſalvation of the ſoul ſhould be our chief concern, and yet never to teſtify the reality of your concern, by applying to Chriſt the great phyſician.

III. For improvement of the ſubject.

Now, my brethren, having heard that the Spirit excites this concern for your ſalvation, and that it is eſſentially neceſſary to it, it is your duty to apply what you have heard to yourſelves. It is needleſs to ſpeak of the preacher

preacher applying it to you; this is your duty, and not his; and unleſs you do this, the diſcourſe which you have now heard, will be to you like a tale that has been told.

Now, what do you ſay to this doctrine? What uſe do you make of the Jailor's caſe? I will freely give you my advice about it. In one word then, if you expect to receive any benefit from this man's caſe, you muſt compare it with your own. Take the Jailor's caſe in all its parts, hold it up before your conſcience, and then conſider whether yours bears any likeneſs to it or not.

A conſiderable number of you are this day to partake of the Lord's ſupper. Now, as I know nothing more proper for preparing you for this ſolemnity than to compare your own caſe with that of the Jailor, I aſk you, whether or not you have ever done this? Intending Communicants, have you ever aſked your conſcience, whether your caſe is like that of the Jailor? Now, what do you ſay to this? You may impoſe upon me, by telling me that you have done ſo; you may even deceive yourſelves, by believing that you have done ſo: but remember, that you are dealing with a heart-ſearching God, and if you attempt to deceive him, what will be the conſequence? It muſt be dreadful; he will one day

day burn up you, and your abominable ſacrifice, by fire from heaven.

Do not imagine that you are ſufficiently prepared for this ſolemn piece of devotion, becauſe you have attended the ſermons preached before its celebration. This will avail nothing. The preparation is in the heart: it is there you muſt look for it; and unleſs you examine it carefully, you cannot know whether you are clothed with the wedding-garment.

Now, my brethren, I hope I may ſay, I have exonered my own conſcience, and pointed out the danger of a raſh approach to Chriſt's table; and if, after this, you ſtill dare to touch the holy things of God with unhallowed hands, all I can ſay more is, God have mercy on your ſouls.

But perhaps there are among you ſome of a different complexion, who are complaining thus: "I fain would do honour to Chriſt, by ſitting down at his table; but I feel ſin ſo often prevalent in me, that I am affraid to ſtep up to the altar. O my Jeſus, my heart burns for communion with thee, but I am affraid my unworthineſs will prevent it." Is this the caſe of any of you? If it is, I wiſh it were the caſe of you all. It is for you that Chriſt has covered his table; it is you

he invites to eat of his fleſh, and to drink of his blood. Comfort yourſelf then, humble ſoul: Come and caſt the burden of ſin down at the croſs, and your gracious Redeemer will take the load off your back. Grant, O God, that this may be the caſe with us all, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Amen.

ADDRESS to the COMMUNICANTS after the Celebration of the Sacrament.

THIS ſolemnity being now come to a concluſion, it will not be improper or unſeaſonable to remind you of the duty incumbent upon you in virtue of the public confeſſion you have this day made of your faith. And that I may not encroach too much upon your time, I ſhall confine what I ſhall ſay to a caution, againſt Enthuſiaſm on the one hand, and Lukewarmneſs on the other. As theſe are the two very oppoſite extremes, into which you are now liable to fall, I am naturally, on this account, led to caution you againſt them.

1*ſt*, Enthuſiaſm, in a religious ſenſe, is nothing elſe, but a perſon's ſuppoſing that he has a principle of religion in him, when he is really deſtitute of it; or, in the words of St.

St. Paul, "Thinking himſelf to be ſomething, "when he is nothing."

Now, this is a deluſion that is extremely dangerous; becauſe, if a man is led into a belief, that he is truly religious, when he is not ſo, he has no more chance to be ſaved, if he continues in that ſtate, than the moſt abandoned profligate: And this, I believe, is a piece of artful cunning by which Satan decoys great numbers to hell.

Two things then are neceſſary to guard you againſt the fatal effects of this great miſtake.

1. If you have received any impreſſions upon your minds, conſider carefully, whether they are owing to the workings of your own affections, or to the power of God. The great danger lies in miſtaking the one of theſe for the other. The affections of the mind are often raiſed to a very high pitch, and yet nothing of God in it at all. The eloquence of the ſpeaker, and the forcibleneſs of his delivery, may often produce in the hearers very ſtrong and raiſed affections; while, at the ſame time, the impreſſion occaſioned thereby is merely mechanical. Add to this, that an affecting ſubject, pathetically illuſtrated, will often, by the power of ſympathy,

ſympathy, excite anſwerable affections, which have nothing of religion in them.

As many, then, are ſo apt to miſtake the workings of their own minds, for the operation of God's Spirit upon them, it is your duty, if you have received any impreſſions at this time, to conſider whether they come from God, or not. If you find that they ſtir up the graces of the Spirit to action in your ſouls; that they humble you under a ſenſe of ſin; that they bring home guilt to your conſcience, and excite you to fly to Chriſt, it will be pretty evident, in that caſe, that they are of divine original.

2. To guard you farther againſt deceiving yourſelves by falſe impreſſions, conſider their tendency. If they do not naturally lead to holineſs; to a hatred of ſin, and the love of righteouſneſs; in ſhort, if your impreſſions do not lead in their effects towards heaven, they can never be ſuppoſed to have come from it. But, on the other hand, if you find that they make you, 1. Vile in your own eyes; 2. make the goſpel precious; 3. ſin hateful; 4. holineſs deſirable; 5. God's children amiable; you may be aſſured that they come from God.

Your examination into this matter ſhould, however, be very ſtrict and accurate: For, if you

you live and die in the belief that you are truly religious, when you really are not ſo, you are as ſure to be damned, as if you had never once thought about God or religion.

2*d*. Another extreme is Lukewarmneſs, againſt which I would alſo caution you.

The great danger of lukewarmneſs and indifference in religion, is evident, if we conſider, that it is offenſive to God, and impedes our progreſs in wiſdom's way, or puts us in danger of giving it up altogether.

Lukewarmneſs in a profeſſor of Chriſtianity is altogether inexcuſable; becauſe every one who has been baptized, is bound, by the moſt ſolemn vows, to ſupport the intereſts of Chriſt's religion to the utmoſt of his power. If, after being thus bound and devoted to God, we are careleſs and indifferent about the religion of Jeſus, we break our vows to God, and give the great Jehovah the lie.

Our Lord, in his addreſs to the church of Laodicea, expreſſes his abhorrence of lukewarmneſs. He tells the members of this church, that they had better never have profeſt his religion, than turn indifferent about it, and renounce it afterwards. Their ſin would not have been ſo great: Becauſe, in the one caſe they would only have been anſwerable for the want of religion; but, in the

the other caſe, having once profeſſed an attachment to Chriſtianity, and turned careleſs about it afterwards, they are chargeable both with hypocriſy in thus dealing with God, and with a total want of religion alſo. Accordingly, our Lord declares, that ſuch unſteady profeſſors he could not bear, "but "would ſpue them out of his mouth." In the ſame terrible language will God, at the great day, ſpeak to us, if we are lukewarm in his cauſe and intereſt.

Let this alarming conſideration excite us to be always "zealouſly affected in a good "cauſe, Gal. iv. 18. and to "be ſtedfaſt and "immoveable, always abounding in the work "of the Lord; for as much as we know "that our labour ſhall not be in vain in the "Lord," 1 Cor. xv. 58.

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE II.

GOD'S LOVE to the SON, and the MEDIATOR'S LOVE to his PEOPLE.

JOHN XV. 9.

As the Father hath loved me, ſo have I loved you, continue ye in my love.

UPON a day dedicated to the great purpoſe of commemorating the death of Chriſt, no ſubjects can be more ſuitable, or better calculated for exciting the neceſſary diſpoſitions of a communicant, than theſe which turn upon the love of Chriſt to ſinners. On this account I have pitched upon theſe words as the ground of the enſuing diſcourſe.

I. I ſhall offer a few ſtrictures upon the Father's love to his Son Jeſus Chriſt.

II. Specify ſome of the moſt remarkable expreſſions of Chriſt's love to man.

III. Shew how we ought to expreſs our love to Chriſt. Then,

IV. Draw ſome inferences from the ſubject.

I. I am to offer a few ſtrictures on the Father's love to his Son Jeſus Chriſt.

I will not, upon this head, conſume your time, by explaining the filiation of Chriſt, or inquiring into the particular mode of that relation which ſubſiſts betwixt God and Chriſt: It is ſufficient to ſatisfy the inquiring mind, to obſerve, that there is between the great Jehovah and Jeſus Chriſt, ſuch a relation as authorizes us to call the one the Father, and the other the Son; though we cannot explain the preciſe modus of the relation, or may differ from one another in our conceptions of it.

It will not however be improper to remark, that in conceiving of the love of God to any object, we muſt be careful to ſeparate from it all degrees of weakneſs and uneaſineſs, which are neceſſarily connected with our

our ideas of that paſſion or affection in men. Add to this, that the love of God operates and expreſſes itſelf differently, when it has Chriſt for its object, than when men are its objects. If we view the love of God as having Chriſt for its object, then it ſignifies that holy complacency and delight which he has in him, both on account of his natural and official character. If, on the other hand, we conſider the love of God as exerciſed toward men, then it is the ſame with benevolence, and compriſes in it all thoſe acts of kindneſs, and friendly offices, which are inſeparably connected with the idea of benevolence.

Having made theſe preliminary remarks, which are neceſſary to guard us againſt miſtaken, and to help us to right conceptions of this part of the ſubject, I ſhall now obſerve, that the love of God to Chriſt, is exerciſed toward him in two capacities, *viz.* as bearing his image and likeneſs as God, and ours as man and Mediator: Or, in other words, God loves Chriſt, both as God and man, both in his original and œconomical character.

The nature and operations of that love which God bears to Chriſt, can only be collected from theſe paſſages of ſcripture which mention it.

The love of God to Chriſt, conſidered as a being whoſe exiſtence is coeval with his own, and who is God equal with him, is expreſſed by the moſt ſimple, though nervous figures in Prov. viii. 30. "Then I was by him," &c. Theſe expreſſions you will eaſily obſerve are borrowed from thoſe circumſtances, which lay the foundation of that love and delight which parents take in their children. And, as they are metaphorical, they muſt be underſtood with certain reſtrictions, and particularly with a neceſſary decency and reſerve when applied to the divine Perſons. That theſe, and other expreſſions in the Proverbs are applied to Chriſt, who is characteriſed in that book under the denomination of Wiſdom, is beyond queſtion; becauſe the rules of criticiſm render them unapplicable to any other object. This point therefore being eſtabliſhed, the expreſſions above quoted will give us the moſt ſublime and exalted ideas of the holy fervency of that love and complacency which God the Father has in his Son Chriſt Jeſus. "Then I was by him." This is the foundation and ſpring of God's love to Chriſt; it expreſſes the intimacy that ſubſiſted between the divine Perſons from all eternity; ſuch an identity of perfections, and ſuch a ſameneſs and unity of deſign, as

that

that the one was the exact reſemblance and expreſſive image of the other. He is alſo ſaid to be "as one brought up with him;" which expreſſion, whilſt it intimates, that Chriſt bore to God the relation of a Son, emphatically expreſſes alſo the affectionate tenderneſs and heart-felt ſympathy which the Father had for the Son; and naturally conveys to us the idea of that warm affection and undiſguiſed love which a parent bears to his only ſon. But this is not all. It is alſo ſaid in John i. 18. that Chriſt lay in his Father's boſom, which metaphorical expreſſion points out to us, that there was ſuch an affection between the Father and the Son, and ſuch a holy complacency and delight in each other, as can only ſubſiſt between congenial ſpirits or kindred ſouls. It is added, "I was daily his delight." Not that there are days in eternity; but that phraſe is uſed by the holy Spirit, in conformity to the mode of ſpeech in common uſe among men, in order to expreſs the invariableneſs, conſtancy, and uniformity of the Father's love to the Son.

But I obſerved in the beginning, that the Father loved the Son, not only in his original character, as a divine Being; but in his mediatorial character, as man.

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The love which he bore to him in this capacity is, perhaps, more adequate to our ſcanty apprehenſions, than that which we have now been eſſaying to explain. The preciſe difference betwixt God's love to Chriſt, in his original character as God, and in his official character as man, conſiſts in this, that his love to him as God is kindled (if the expreſſion is not too bold when applied to God) by his being the expreſs image of his Father's perſon; and his love to him as Mediator is founded upon his eager deſire to obey his Father's will, and his fully completing every part of his mediatorial work, to the glory of God, John x. 17.

It would be no difficult matter to illuſtrate the love of God to Chriſt as Mediator, by quoting the paſſages of ſcripture which contain a repreſentation of it. But, that I may not detain you too long from the proper buſineſs of this day, I ſhall content myſelf with mentioning the famous teſtimony which God bore to Chriſt after his baptiſm, conceived in theſe words, "This is my beloved "Son," &c.

In this paſſage God ſpeaks of Chriſt in his mediatorial capacity; and it ſtrongly expreſſes the delight which God had in Chriſt's willingneſs to obey his will, and in the glorious

proſpect

proſpect which that afforded him of reſtoring the rational creature to his favour, and eſtabliſhing a plan of government in the world beneficial to mankind, and honourable to God and his righteous laws.

Upon the whole then, conceive in your imaginations an only ſon, brought up in his father's houſe, conſtantly under his eye, the expreſs likeneſs, the very image of his father, of a diſpoſition congenial with and akin to his own: Apply this to the caſe in hand, with ſuch reſtrictions as are neceſſary when our thoughts are turned to divine perſons, and then you will have a juſt, though only a diſproportioned conception of God's love to Chriſt, conſidered in his divine nature.

Again, figure to yourſelves, a ſon zealous for the honour of his father, chearfully diſpoſed to ſacrifice his life, and every thing dear and valuable to him, to promote it; not only ready to obey his father's commands, but delighting to do it: Imagine to yourſelves what ſatisfaction and delight ſuch a ſon muſt yield the father; and then you may from this conclude with reſpect to that love which God the Father bore from everlaſting to Jeſus Chriſt as Mediator.

I come now to the ſecond head, which was,

II. To

II. To ſpecify ſome of the moſt remarkable expreſſions of Chriſt's love to man.

"As the Father hath loved me," &c. This expreſſion implies, that Chriſt's love to us bears at leaſt ſome proportion to the Father's love to him.

To enumerate all the extraordinary inſtances of Chriſt's love to ſinners, pleaſing as the taſk might be, would be too much for one diſcourſe. Brevity obliges me, therefore, to confine myſelf to a few.

The firſt circumſtance which naturally occurs to us, and which greatly ſets off and enhances the love of Chriſt is, that mankind, the objects of this love, had rebelled againſt his Father, thrown off their allegiance to him, and trampled upon his holy and righteous laws. Had the caſe been otherwiſe with reſpect to mankind, had they ſtill continued in their obedience to God, and in the faithful diſcharge of their duty to him, the Son's love to them would not have been ſurprizing: But that the heart of the Son ſtill glowed warmly with love and pity for his Father's revolted ſubjects, and that he was willing to ſacrifice his very life to reſtore them to the protection of their injured Sovereign, is an event ſo grand and ennobling as will afford

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an inexhauſtible ſource of contemplation to angels and glorified ſpirits through the numberleſs years of eternity. To love thoſe that are connected with us by the ties of nature, is a duty interwoven with our conſtitution itſelf; to love thoſe that bear the ſame affection for us, is what even the wicked themſelves can boaſt; to love thoſe who have done, or are doing us friendly and benevolent offices, is what the principles of our minds, and a ſenſe of gratitude, ſtrongly prompts us to: But to love thoſe who are ill diſpoſed towards ourſelves, and who have behaved with obſtinacy and ingratitude to our neareſt and deareſt friends, is an inſtance of love for which the Son of God ſtands alone diſtinguiſhed in the annals of hiſtory. But the unparalleled greatneſs of the Redeemer's love to ſinners, not only appears from its objects, but its acts alſo.

Chriſt's love to ſinners coſt him very dear. Actuated by the glowing impulſes of this affection, he deſcended from the manſions above, to this earth, where he underwent the moſt trying circumſtances of diſtreſs. Inſtead of meeting with that reception which ſo exalted a character deſerved, and that candid hearing to which his juſt pretenſions entitled him, he was branded with the infamous

name

name of an impoſtor, and at once accuſed of being in league with the prince of devils. All the various and diſcordant paſſions of mankind united their joint force in vilifying his unſullied character. The pride of ſome, touched by his ſevere, though juſt reprehenſions, fired their breaſts with the keeneſt reſentment againſt him. The ambition of others, humbled by his mortifyng doctrines, loaded their hearts with malice againſt this divine preacher. Having ſapped the foundations upon which the Sadducees built their atheiſtic principles, and undermined theſe religious ſuperſtructures which the Phariſees had built upon their long prayers, and external obſervances, theſe two ſects, though widely different in their principles, united their efforts to calumniate his ſacred character, to impede the progreſs of his holy religion, nay, to aſſaſſinate his divine body.

But, O Chriſtians, this is not all; our tender-hearted Redeemer not only, out of love to you, bore theſe unprovoked inſults, but gave himſelf up to a cruel, ignominious, and curſed death, to reſtore you to his Father's protection and favour. Now, what was it but love that prompted the Son of God to allow his bleſſed name to be vilified by wicked lips; what but the powerful workings

ings of love, could make the Son of the moſt High give up his ſacred life to be taken away by unhallowed hands. Surely, this is love without parallel, love without precedent.

Another expreſſion of his love is, the miſſion of the holy Spirit, to complete the work of redemption in mens hearts, and to aſſiſt the Chriſtian, in the courſe of his ſojourning in this world.

The effuſion of the holy Spirit, is univerſally aſcribed in ſcripture to the aſcenſion of Chriſt; and is, without diſpute, one of the bleſſed fruits of his purchaſe as Mediator. Now, the promiſe of the holy Spirit is one of the moſt invaluable bleſſings procured by Chriſt to his church upon earth; becauſe the Chriſtian here is always among the Philiſtines, ſurrounded with enemies, and beſet with dangers; and were it not for the comfort which this promiſe gives him, and the ſeaſonable aid which the Spirit affords him, the pilgrim travelling towards heaven, would often fall a prey to his ravenous enemies. But our bleſſed Immanuel did not think it enough to procure us a legal title to his Father's favour, by removing all impediments to it; but ſent his Spirit alſo to guard his followers in the midſt of dangers, to fortify them againſt

temptations, and to adminiſter comfort to them in the midſt of diſtreſſes.

Laſtly, The eſtabliſhment of a goſpel miniſtry upon earth, is another expreſſion of his love.—That the world might not be without a memorial of the great Shepherd, he has eſtabliſhed an order of men upon earth, veſted with a commiſſion from him, to publiſh his goſpel to ſinners; in his name, and by his authority, to invite them to be reconciled to his Father, and to accept of a free pardon for all paſt offences: This is an extraordinary expreſſion of his love; becauſe, through this order of men, as inſtruments, ſinners are converted, ſaints eſtabliſhed, and his gracious deſigns towards ſinners fully compleated and accompliſhed.

III. Let us now conſider how we ought to expreſs our love to Chriſt.

Love, according to the common adage, begets love. It is only a gracious diſcovery of the greatneſs of Chriſt's love, that can inſpire the heart with correſpondent feelings of love to him.

Such then as have theſe ſpiritual views of the love of Chriſt, will expreſs their affection to him:

1. By

1. By obſerving carefully what he hath left us in charge.

Profeſſions of love to Chriſt, however big; and pretenſions to the divine affection, however ſtrong, are entirely inavailable, unleſs their truth and reality be evinced by a correſpondent practice. This our Saviour himſelf expreſsly declares, when he ſays, "If ye "love me, keep my commandments." The keeping his commandments is the only teſt and proof of love to him. Talking about religion, with great volubility of tongue; contending zealouſly for the truths of Chriſtianity, and an appearance of ſanctity and holineſs, however ſpecious, will not prove that a man's heart is filled with love to Chriſt: Nothing will do this, but a careful obſervance of what he hath left us in charge.

2. The Chriſtian will expreſs his love to Chriſt, by loving and doing beneficent offices to his friends. It is always an acceptable piece of affection to a friend, when he is out of our reach, if we are kind to his friends on his account. And though Chriſt ſtands in no need of any acts of kindneſs from us, yet he has declared, that if we give a cup of cold water, or do the ſmalleſt favour, to any of his diſciples, he will eſteem it as done to himſelf. Thoſe then, my brethren, who ca-

lumniate

lumniate and aſperſe, leſſen and reproach the faithful followers of Chriſt, reach a blow at Chriſt himſelf; and while they fooliſhly think that they are only wounding his followers, they are in reality making a thruſt at the Lamb of God himſelf: and theſe injuries done to his followers and people, Chriſt will puniſh as done to his own perſon. By a parity of reaſon, we, on the other hand, conclude, that whoever does the leaſt friendly office to a child of God, for Chriſt's ſake, does honour to Chriſt; and he will look upon it as an expreſſion of love to himſelf.

Laſtly, The Chriſtian ſhould expreſs his love to Chriſt, by frequently partaking of the ſacrament of his ſupper. The principles of gratitude to the Redeemer lay the Chriſtian under obligations to remember affectionately what he has done and ſuffered for him; but our Lord's ſpecial command for this purpoſe, ſtrengthens thoſe obligations to remember him in the ordinance of his ſupper. Now, the receiving this ordinance with humility and faith, is a proper expreſſion of love to Chriſt, becauſe we thereby do honour to him by publicly declaring, that we are not aſhamed of his croſs, nor afraid to acknowledge him, and profeſs our allegiance to him, in the very face of his enemies.

IV.

IV. Let us now improve the ſubject with a few inferences.

1. From the ſubject we infer, That our love to Chriſt ſhould be greater than that which we have for any other object; and that we ought to be careful to guard againſt ſuch things as may rival him in our affections. When you reflect on the manifold expreſſions of Chriſt's love to you, the unworthineſs of you its objects, the reproach and perſecution, and the inglorious death he ſuffered on your account, you will eaſily ſee, that he has the beſt title to the throne of your hearts. Why then will you rob your Saviour of his juſt due, by placing that affection upon any other object, which, in juſtice and equity, belongs to him. To forget thoſe who have been your benefactors; to be inſenſible to the impulſe of gratitude towards thoſe who have done you ſome great and friendly offices, exhibits a character and diſpoſition deteſtable in ſocial life. But to have a heart cold and indifferent to the Redeemer is a ſpecies of ingratitude almoſt unprecedented; and to fix upon another object that affection which is his juſt due, is a kind of religious robbery, a degree of ſpiritual theft, wicked in itſelf, eternally diſgraceful to the rational nature,

nature, provoking to God, and conſequently hazardous to the ſoul.

Laſtly, It is not only our duty to love Chriſt, but to continue in his love. In the text, he infers our obligation to love him from his love to us; adding, "Continue ye "in my love." Tranſient, or temporary acts of love to the Redeemer, ſignify very little: There may be occaſional glowings of affection in the ſoul, while, at the ſame time, it is deſtitute of true love to him. Our love to him muſt be fixed, permanent, and uniform; otherwiſe we have no right to rank ourſelves with thoſe who love the unſeen Saviour. To love Chriſt one while, and the world another; to be a devotee of religion at one time, and the humble ſervant and ſlave of Mammon at another: In a word, to profeſs love to Jeſus, by receiving the ſymbols of his body and blood in the ſacrament of his ſupper, and afterwards to be a dupe to your unmortified luſts and paſſions, is ſuch a duplicity of conduct, ſuch perfidiouſneſs and treachery to him, as will mark your name with eternal infamy in the annals of heaven; and render you odious to God, unfit for heaven, and the prey of devils and wicked fiends, amidſt everlaſting burnings. Weigh the matter,

ter, then, with deliberation, before you take the important ſtep for which you are met together this day. Conſider calmly what is neceſſary to prepare you for this goſpel feaſt, and what is reaſonably expected of you afterwards; and remember, that no man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. Amen.

DISCOURSE III.

The MINISTER's great END in preaching the Goſpel, NOT TO MAKE PROSELYTES to a Party*.

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1 COR. i. 17.

For Chriſt ſent me not to baptize, but to preach the goſpel: not with wiſdom of words, leſt the croſs of Chriſt ſhould be made of none effect.

THOUGH the doctrines of Chriſt are unalterable in their nature, and muſt of neceſſity be the ſame in all ages, and in all places, yet we find the fooliſh caprices of men, has made them appear in different ſhapes, in different periods and countries.

In the days of our Saviour, before men had learned the art of making gain of godlineſs,

* Preached at the Ordination of Mr William Campbell to the paſtoral office at Dyſart, Feb. 23. 1774.

lineſs, in a literal ſenſe, the votaries of religion, propoſing to themſelves neither worldly honour, wealth, nor riches, by profeſſing it, appeared clothed with all the humility and ſelf-denial which it ſo ſtrongly recommends; and Religion itſelf was then ſeen in all its native ſimplicity, unencumbered with the unnatural additions and embelliſhments of men. In proceſs of time, when it was found that religion was ſubſervient to worldly intereſt, ſome of its profeſſors, wanting to make the kingdom of Chriſt reſemble the kingdoms of this world, ſtripped religion, in a great meaſure, of its native ſimplicity, and dreſſed it up in garments of their own making. Others, wanting to make religion, in ſome meaſure, give its countenance to certain faſhionable vices, tried to explain down ſuch of its principles as forbid any indulgencies of that kind; and modelled the ſyſtem according to their own views and tempers. This bad precedent, as might naturally be expected, encouraged others to uſe the ſame criminal liberties with religion, which has occaſioned the face of it to wear almoſt a different aſpect, in every century, ſince the apoſtolic age. And what could be expected from ſuch conduct as this, but that men would divide into ſects and parties, ranking

themſelves under different leaders, which every body knows was really the caſe. This naturally produced altercations and endleſs diſputes amongſt profeſſors; each leader of a ſect contending that his ſyſtem was the pureſt and moſt unadulterated. The queſtion then ſeemed to be, not, What is the religion of Jeſus? but, What is the religion of the leader under whom I have ranked myſelf? Something of this peſtiferous ſpirit began to appear as early as the days of the Corinthian church. The miniſters of this church, conſiſted partly of converted Jews, and partly of converted Gentiles. Both kinds of converts brought a little of the leaven of their old religion along with them, which probably gave the firſt riſe to their differences; and their wealth and riches, procured by their extenſive commercial connections, naturally engendered pride and haughtineſs, and made them vie with each other for the ſuperiority in religion. Hence they divided into ſects and parties, and claſſed themſelves under different leaders, one ſaying, "I am of Paul," &c. It was theſe unhappy diviſions in the church, that gave riſe to this epiſtle; the great purpoſe of which is, to convince the Corinthians of the abſurdity and unreaſonableneſs of

their

their diſputes, and to reconcile the angry diſputants to one another.

Though the great apoſtle, in virtue of his privilege and authority as an inſpired writer, had a right peremptorily to decide the controverſy at once, he condeſcends to reaſon the matter with the Corinthians. He argues the wildneſs and abſurdity of their claſſing themſelves under different leaders, ſome under Paul, ſome under Apollos, and others under Cephas, from this conſideration, that Chriſt could not be divided; that his doctrines, precepts, and laws, were unalterably the ſame; and that, though men, through ignorance, on the one hand, and prejudice on the other, might explain them different ways, and have different views of them, yet ſtill their nature and quality could not be changed. And he further argues, that as Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas, were all miniſters commiſſioned by Chriſt, and taught the very ſame doctrines, it was ridiculous in the Corinthians to make them the heads and leaders of different parties, and ſome of them to ſay, I am of Paul; and others, I am of Apollos; and others, I am of Cephas. But ſince they had fallen into this error, and fooliſhly imagined, that the apoſtles were making proſelytes for themſelves, and baptizing in their

own

own names, Paul for himſelf declares, that he thanked God, that he had only baptized a very few families among them; leſt, if he had baptized more, they ſhould have been thereby encouraged in their fooliſh prejudices.

The words of our text contain the reaſon of his thankfulneſs for baptizing ſo few among them: "For Chriſt ſent me not to "baptize, but to preach the goſpel."

In diſcourſing upon theſe words, which will be explained in the progreſs of the diſcourſe, I propoſe:

I. To ſhew in what ſenſe a miniſter of the goſpel is ſaid to be ſent *not to baptize.*

II. To ſhew what the buſineſs of a miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt is, *viz. To preach the goſpel.* Then,

III. Offer ſomething for improvement of the ſubject.

I. I am to ſhew in what ſenſe a miniſter of the goſpel is ſaid to be ſent *not to baptize.*

That we may illuſtrate this department of the ſubject with perſpicuity, it will be proper

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to enquire a little into the apoſtle's meaning with reſpect to himſelf, when he ſays, "Chriſt ſent me," &c. And then we will clearly ſee how the expreſſion is applicable to the ordinary miniſters of Chriſt. It is abundantly obvious from our Lord's commiſſion to his apoſtles, Matth. xxviii. 19. that baptizing is included in the powers with which they are intruſted. The Apoſtle's meaning in this paſſage then cannot be, that he, or any ordinary miniſter, has no authority to baptize; or, that baptizing is no part of their work. The generality of expoſitors therefore agree, that the ſenſe of the expreſſion is, that though Paul, as an apoſtle, had authority to baptize, yet that was not his chief buſineſs; but that the great and ultimate end and deſign of his miſſion was to preach the goſpel.

This, without all diſpute, is the general ſenſe of the paſſage. But it will not, I preſume, be injurious to the apoſtle's meaning, to conſider the expreſſion as having an immediate reference to the particular ſtate of affairs in the Corinthian church. This church, as was obſerved in the introduction, was unhappily divided into ſects and parties. One cauſe of this was, perhaps, their vicinity to the ſchools of the different ſects of heathen philoſophers,

loſophers, particularly the Platoniſts, Epicureans, and Peripatetics. Theſe philoſophers, at the inauguration of their ſcholars and diſciples, obſerved a particular form or ceremony, which ſerved as the Shibboleth of their ſect, and diſtinguiſhed their reſpective followers and diſciples. The Corinthians, in all probability, through the influence of unaccountable prejudice, in ſome meaſure, confounded the inſtitution of baptiſm with the inauguration-ceremony of the heathen philoſophers; and concluded, that Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, when they baptized, were making diſciples to themſelves; and that baptiſm ſerved the ſame end in Chriſtianity, as the inauguration-ceremony did in philoſophy.

In oppoſition to this, the apoſtle declares, that by baptizing he did not mean to make proſelytes to himſelf; to ſet himſelf up as the leader of a party, or to aſpire to a dominion or lordſhip over any man's faith. No; far be the thought from him: he was ſent to preach the goſpel, to publiſh the glad tidings of ſalvation, through the grace of Chriſt, not to eſtabliſh a ſect or party, like the philoſophers, but to call men to repentance; to convert ſinners into ſaints, without making himſelf great or conſpicuous, or having any

any views of eſtabliſhing a ſect in oppoſition to Apollos and Peter, or any other miniſter that had been ſent to preach among them.

This ſenſe of the paſſage, though it may have, at firſt ſight, the appearance of being ſtrained or forced, is as natural as the common one. For certainly, if the apoſtle could, with propriety, ſay, that to baptize, conſidered as an inſtitution of Chriſt, was not the chief part of his office, he might, with ſtill greater force and energy, ſay, that Chriſt ſent him not to baptize, in the ſenſe in which we have been ſuppoſing the Corinthians underſtood it, *i e.* to make proſelytes to himſelf. And, at the ſame time, unleſs we ſuppoſe that the Corinthians underſtood the apoſtle's baptizing in this ſenſe, we cannot ſo well underſtand the connection which the ſtrong expreſſion in the 14th verſe has with the general ſubject of the chapter, or the particular ſituation of the Corinthian church. However, I am far from urging this ſenſe of the paſſage, to the excluſion of the common explication of it.

Having thus inquired into the apoſtle's meaning in the paſſage, with reſpect to himſelf, we will eaſily ſee in what ſenſe it is applicable to ordinary miniſters of the goſpel.

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The Chriſtian church, like the Corinthian, is now divided into different ſects and parties, and the profeſſors of religion have claſſed themſelves under different leaders. Religion in this age, appears in a variety of ſhapes and forms, and even in the ſame nation wears a different aſpect. This has unhappily given riſe to endleſs diſputes and controverſies between profeſſors, in different ſects. Hence one man, embarked in a party, apprehends that his honour, in a great meaſure, depends upon the ſupport of his party, and he compaſſes ſea and land to make one proſelyte. Another man, joined with another ſect, viewing things much in the ſame light, ſtruggles hard to make his party appear greateſt and moſt conſpicuous in the eyes of the world. This competition and interference of intereſts is moſt injurious and prejudicial to true religion, to its miniſters and profeſſors. It is hurtful to its miniſters, becauſe the rage of a party ſpirit, contracted by an unreaſonable attachment to their own peculiar ſyſtem, makes them forget, that they were not ſent to baptize, but to preach the goſpel: It is hurtful to the profeſſors of religion, becauſe it obſtructs the free courſe of brotherly love; like a canker eats it out of their hearts, and like

like madmen, makes them caſt firebrands, arrows, and death, at each other.

No doubt our great Redeemer has valuable ends and purpoſes to ſerve, by allowing different ſects and parties to ariſe in his church; and indeed, they might have been more innocent and harmleſs, had the world made a proper uſe of them: But our fatal error is, thus fired with a party-ſpirit we are apt to be more zealous for the proſperity of our party, than that of our ſouls; and, in the midſt of the ſtruggle, we forget the one thing needful.

This is the caſe with too many private profeſſors; and I wiſh I could ſay that all thoſe of our office were free of the ſame ſpirit likewiſe. I am affraid, my brethren, that we are more careful to inſtruct our hearers in the punctilios and diſtinguiſhing peculiarities of our own party, than in the great and ſubſtantial truths of the goſpel. How oppoſite is this to the account which the apoſtle gives of the paſtoral office in the text: "Chriſt ſent me not to baptize," &c. Miniſters of the goſpel ought to remember, that the great end and deſign of their office and miſſion, is to bring ſouls to the knowledge and love of Chriſt; to diffuſe the amiable and goſpel-like ſpirit of brotherly love

every where; and that, when they divert the attention of their hearers from theſe great truths which are the food of ſouls, to ſuch things as are of leſſer importance, and are peculiar to their ſect, they are then feeding Chriſt's flock with chaff inſtead of wheat, and forgetting that they were not ſent to baptize, but to preach the goſpel. It is true, indeed, that the ſhepherds of Chriſt ſhould connect themſelves with that ſect which they think the pureſt; but, at the ſame time, they ſhould remember, that their chief buſineſs is not to render their ſect great and conſpicuous in the eyes of the world, but to bring ſouls to glory; which they can only do by feeding them with the wholeſome food of the goſpel, and not with the leaven of a party. Miniſters ought to conſider, that they are not commiſſioned by Chriſt, to be the leaders of ſects and parties, or to exerciſe dominion over mens conſciences, but to be helpers of their joy, and to lead them to the truth as it is in Jeſus. The chief object of their zeal, then, ſhould not be to "baptize," *i.e.* to make a party, "but to preach the goſpel." However, that we may form a juſt notion of the paſtoral office, let us ſuppoſe a character in that office the reverſe of this. Let us take a view, then, of a miniſter of the goſpel at the head

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of a party, zealous for its proſperity, and aſſiduous in inſtructing his followers in all its parts and peculiarities; declaiming from the ſacred deſk, every Lord's day, upon the diſtinguiſhing excellencies of his ſyſtem; and inveighing with becoming warmth againſt the defections and errors of others: Let us ſuppoſe that he ſucceeds in his labours; that his hearers are fired with zeal for their party; that they can unravel all its parts, underſtand all its peculiarities, and defend them with great ſtrength of argument againſt the objections of gainſayers. I aſk you, my hearers, what will be the conſequence of this? Will the ſouls of thoſe mighty zealots be fed by their knowledge of the triffling ſingularities of a party? Will they be thereby convinced of ſin, enlightened in the knowledge of Chriſt, and warned to fly from the wrath to come? I doubt not. If they are fed, I am affraid it is with the chaff; if convinced, it is only of the ſuperior excellence of their party; if enlightened, it is only in the knowledge of their own diſtinguiſhing tenets; and if warned, it is only to fly from ſuch as differ from them. Are they then made Chriſtians? are their hearts ſavingly changed, and their lives reformed? Far from it; their attention is only engroſſed by party affairs,

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their ſpirits are embittered, and they are as much ſtrangers to the power of godlineſs as ever. This method, then, of preaching is inconſiſtent with the great ends of a preached goſpel.

Why all this noiſe and buſtle, then, about ſects and parties? Though you may belong to the pureſt party upon earth; yet, if you are not regenerated and born again, you can never ſee the kingdom of God. This ought certainly then to be the great object of every Chriſtian's zeal; and, to accompliſh this end, ſhould be the conſtant endeavour of every miniſter. I will readily allow, that a certain ſhare of a miniſter's zeal ought to have the ſupport of his party for its object; but then, the health and proſperity of the ſouls commited to his care, ought to be his chief concern.

In a word, to ſhew the abſurdity of God's ſervants being more zealous for the ſupport of a party, than for the intereſts of precious ſouls, let us ſuppoſe, for a moment, that all parties were aboliſhed, and that Chriſtians were not diſtinguiſhed from one another by particular denominations, and that there was neither Epiſcopalian, Preſbyterian, nor Independent; what would be the conſequence of this? Why, my brethren, if there were

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ſtill paſtors ſent of God, who taught the truth as it is in Jeſus, rebuked, exhorted, and reproved, God would countenance the labours of his own ſervants; and religion would flouriſh, and ſouls thrive, though the names of theſe different ſects had never been heard of. I do not mean by this to inſinuate, that in reſpect of purity there is no difference betwixt the ſects that bear the names of the different denominations; but only to hint, that greater ſtreſs ought not to be laid upon party diſtinctions than they really deſerve.

II. I proceed poſitively to ſhew what the buſineſs of a miniſter is, *viz. to preach the goſpel.*

1. A miniſter, in preaching the goſpel, ought to be careful to ſet out upon this firſt principle, *viz.* That the end and deſign of the goſpel, and the preaching of it, is the ſalvation of precious ſouls; or, in other words, to change mens hearts, to make them holy here, that they may be happy hereafter; and, in ſhort, to convert ſinners into Chriſtians. The goſpel is not to be conſidered merely as a ſyſtem of truths or principles publiſhed for the ſpeculation and ſtudy of mankind, and the improvement of their underſtandings. It

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is a diſpenſation of grace, deſigned, by its great Author, to renew the heart, to change the moral diſpoſitions of the ſoul, and to render men fit for glorifying God here, that they may enjoy him hereafter.

2. The preacher of the goſpel having ſet out upon this principle, that the end and deſign of the goſpel is the ſalvation of ſouls; ought, in the next place, to conſider what are the ingredients that are neceſſary to compoſe the character of a true Chriſtian.

The holy ſcripture has paved the way to the knowledge of this point, by giving us a clear and ſuccinct account of the preſent ſtate of human nature. It repreſents man as being guilty in the eye of God's law, in conſequence of the firſt man's tranſgreſſion of it; as being under a ſentence of condemnation, and a child of wrath. The ſcripture farther informs us, that, in order to take off this condemnatory ſentence, and remove all legal obſtructions to our juſtification, Jeſus Chriſt fulfilled the law, and offered himſelf an expiatory ſacrifice upon the croſs. This being done, God, as the apoſtle expreſſes it, was rendered juſt in juſtifying the ungodly; but then, as the ſinner was not only legally, but actually guilty and polluted in the ſight of God, in order to render him fit for the enjoyment

joyment of God in heaven, it was neceſſary that a change ſhould be made in his ſoul, and his diſpoſition ſanctified and renewed. The word of God then proceeds to inform us, that our exalted Redeemer purchaſed the Spirit in his gracious operations, whoſe office is to cleanſe the leper's houſe, to lead the child of God to all truth, and to ſanctify him in body, ſoul, and ſpirit.

Now, a careful attendance to theſe things will let the Chriſtian preacher ſee, that in order to the transformation of a ſinner into a Chriſtian, he muſt firſt be juſtified in the ſight of God by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; in conſequence of which, his legal guilt is expunged; and that, poſterior to this, his actual guilt, or moral pollution, muſt be removed, by the holy Spirit infuſing a new principle of life and action into his ſoul, thereby enabling him to perform the duties of goſpel obedience.

In thus pointing out the neceſſary ingredients that compoſe the character of a Chriſtian, the Chriſtian preacher ought to be careful to place the ingredients in their proper order and connection. If the order is inverted, the character is deſtroyed, and is a medley of jarring heterogeneous ingredients. To ſuppoſe a ſanctified perſon, previous

vious to his being juſtified, is to ſuppoſe a condemned criminal ſet free from priſon, before a pardon is granted by his prince. Again, to ſuppoſe holineſs of life, previous to the ſanctification of the heart, is to ſuppoſe an effect without a cauſe; and, in a word, to ſuppoſe a ſoul dead in treſpaſſes and ſins capable of performing the actions of the ſpiritual life, is, to ſuppoſe a dead man capable of doing the actions and performing the functions of a living one. In ſhort, my brethren, God, in the goſpel, has obſerved ſuch an œconomy in the formation and ſupport of the ſpiritual world, (I mean the ſoul) as he has obſerved in the natural world, (*viz.* the body of man.) A principle of natural life muſt be infuſed into the body, before its parts can be capable of performing their reſpective functions; ſo, in like manner, a principle of ſpiritual life muſt be firſt implanted in the ſoul, before it be fit for performing the actions aſſigned to it. To ſuppoſe a Chriſtian without a principle of ſpiritual life, is as abſurd as to ſuppoſe a living man without life. The Chriſtian preacher, therefore, muſt be careful, in inveſtigating the ſprings, principles, and actions of the Chriſtian life, never to place holineſs of life before ſanctification of the heart; or that, before juſtification.

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It is by not attending to this goſpel-order of things, that many fall into ſuch dangerous miſtakes, and that there are ſuch different methods of preaching prevalent amongſt us.

Theſe parts of the Chriſtian character are like the heavenly bodies, that have all their particular places of reſidence aſſigned them; and only when placed there, anſwer their reſpective ends in the univerſal ſyſtem. Suppoſe them miſplaced; the moon where the ſun is, and the ſtars ſupplying the place of the moon; in this caſe, the beautiful firmament would be a perfect chaos.

Theſe then are the great ingredients that compoſe the Chriſtian character, and the order in which they muſt be placed to render the character conſiſtent and compleat: And as to the manner in which goſpel truths are to be repreſented, we obſerve,

Laſtly, In the words of the text, That the goſpel is to be preached "not with wiſdom "of words."

The goſpel at firſt was propagated by its own ſimple and unadorned evidence. It made its way through all oppoſition, not by force of arms; not by the ſuitableneſs of its doctrines to the taſte of the times, nor by the captivating eloquence of its preachers; but by the power of the Spirit accompanying the

ſimple evidence of its truth. Infidels were converted, the wicked reclaimed; not by promiſes of preferment, or hopes of worldly honour and emolument, but by the powerful evidence of truth. It is only in this way that the goſpel can ſtill flouriſh; and therefore it ought to be preached, in the way that it can only have ſucceſs, not with wiſdom of men. To dreſs up the goſpel with all the embelliſhments of human eloquence, is to clothe it with a garb that is unnatural and prepoſterous; and, to ſet off its truths, with a pompous parade of words, and with all the ſtudied ornaments of rhetoric, is only caſting a veil upon their ſimplicity, in which their chief excellence conſiſts. The reaſon aſſigned by the apoſtle, why the goſpel ought not to be preached with the wiſdom of words, is, that thereby the croſs of Chriſt is made of none effect, and the ſucceſs of the goſpel intirely blaſted. Preaching the goſpel with wiſdom of words renders it of no effect two ways. Firſt, it is apt to make men believe, that the ſucceſs of the goſpel does not depend upon its own naked and undiſtinguiſhed evidence, but upon the oratorical powers and perſuaſive eloquence of him who diſpenſes it: Or, ſecondly, by preaching in this way, ſo unſuitable to its nature and ſimplicity, God

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may be provoked to frown upon the labours of the preacher, and to withhold his convincing and enlightening Spirit, which is the ſoul of truth.

The preacher of the goſpel, then, in delineating its truths, muſt be careful not to fix any artificial colouring upon them, or to dreſs them in flowers plucked from the garden of human eloquence; leſt their ſimplicity be hid from the eye, and the croſs of Chriſt be of none effect.

Upon the whole, this ſubject furniſhes an inſtructive leſſon both to preachers and hearers of the goſpel.

It teaches miniſters of the goſpel, that ſeeing the great end and deſign of it is the ſalvation of ſouls, and that they are appointed as inſtruments under God for applying it to the heart; they ought therefore to be inſtant in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, and to watch carefully over the flock of Chriſt committed to their charge.

How many and how powerful are the motives with which the Chriſtian preacher is furniſhed, to animate him to vigilance and faithfulneſs in his important work? The worth and value of ſouls is none of the leaſt powerful of theſe motives. Immortal ſpirits are the objects of the Chriſtian ſhepherd's

care,

care, and their proſperity here, and happineſs hereafter, according to the divine appointment, depend, in ſome meaſure, upon his faithfulneſs. God has provided bread for the ſouls of his people in the goſpel, he has committed the diſtribution of it to his ſervants; if they keep it back from his ſheep, great God! how aggravated is their guilt? How raviſhing, how pleaſing muſt it be to the faithful ſhepherd to ſee his flock flouriſhing under his care? but, O! how heart-rending muſt the very thought and ſuſpicion be, that precious ſouls, committed to our care, have periſhed through negligence, and that they might have been ſaved, had we not withheld from, or given only ſparingly to them the bread of life.

The example of Chriſt affords his ſervants another powerful motive to animate them to diſcharge their duty with ardour and diligence. He is repreſented as carrying the lambs in his boſom, and gently leading thoſe that are with young. Animated by his example, let us ſtrive to become all things to all men; to deal with his ſheep in a way ſuitable to their reſpective ſtates and conditions. Deeply impreſſed with a ſenſe of the importance of our truſt, let us ſtrive to inſtruct the ignorant, to comfort the doubting,

to confirm the wavering, and to build up the ſaints. It is that which can only give us peace of mind here, and it is this that can only procure us the approbation of the great Shepherd, on that awful day that will ſummon ſhepherd and ſheep, paſtor and people, before a tribunal from which there lies no appeal.

I ſaid, the doctrine affords an uſeful leſſon to hearers as well as miniſters. The goſpel is preached amongſt you, and it will either be the ſavour of life or death to your ſouls. Let this conſideration ſtir you up to hear God's voice whilſt he is ſpeaking to you, leſt your hearts be hardened with the deceitfulneſs of ſin, and you never enter into his reſt.

Laſtly, Let miniſters and people take care, that they do nothing that will either marr the ſucceſs of the one, or hinder and retard the ſalvation of the other. I am perſuaded nothing has a more fatal tendency this way, than miniſters and hearers embroiling themſelves with inſignificant brangles of ſects and parties.—It is hurtful to the preacher, becauſe it inſenſibly leads him to mix the leaven of party diſputes with the truths of Jeſus; and his pulpit, inſtead of

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ſounding with the peace and love of the go-ſpel, roars with thunderings and anathemas againſt thoſe who have the misfortune not to ſee with his eyes.—It is highly pernicious to hearers, becauſe by fiſhing always in the dirty puddle of party diſputes, they contract a narrow, ſelfiſh, and illiberal ſpirit; brotherly love is baniſhed from their hearts, and their attention gradually diverted from the one thing needful. To conclude then, with the apoſtle's exhortation, which is equally applicable to miniſters and people, "Let your mo-" deration be known unto all men:" Which may God grant, for Chriſt's ſake. Amen.

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE IV.

JESUS CHRIST the FOOD of the SOUL.

JOHN vi. 53.

Then ſaid Jeſus unto them, Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, Except ye eat the fleſh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

MAN is a creature whoſe conſtitution is compounded of very different materials. He is partly fleſh, partly ſpirit; partly material, and partly immaterial. The firſt part of his conſtitution was formed out of the duſt, the ſecond part of it comes immediately from the Creator. Though there are directions given in the divine record, for the regulation of the body, and the animal paſſions and affections that ariſe from this part of the human conſtitution; yet, it is chiefly about

about the ſoul, or the ſpiritual part of our conſtitution, that religion is converſant. It is by not attending to this obvious fact, that many are often betrayed into very groſs and uncouth notions of various parts of holy ſcripture; and it is this overſight that makes many truths of religion wear a myſterious and forbidding aſpect. We may alſo add, that our lame and imperfect notions of ſpirit, contribute greatly to lead us into miſconceptions of theſe parts of ſcripture that contain an account of the life and operations of the ſpirit or ſoul. Nothing, however, is more certain, than that the ſoul or ſpirit has a life peculiar to it, and quite diſtinct from the animal life, or the life of the body. It is equally certain, that this life muſt have its ſupports; becauſe life, of whatever ſpecies, muſt be ſupported, otherwiſe it will inevitably periſh: And, as the life of a ſpirit differs widely, in its nature and operations, from the animal life, it muſt be ſupported in a different way too.

Accordingly, our Lord, in this chapter, gives the Jews an account of the nature and qualities of that food, which God had provided for the ſuſtenance and nouriſhment of the ſoul. He was led to this ſubject, by the animadverſions which the ſpectators made upon

upon the miracle of the loaves and the fishes. Finding, that the miracle itself had excited their curiosity, and knowing that they followed him, because they had eaten of the loaves, and were filled, he takes the opportunity, in the 27th verse, of exhorting them, not to let their chief solicitude and care be about the perishable food of this mortal body; but to let their governing aims, enquiries, and pains be for the permanent, unfading food of their immortal souls. With respect to the nature of the food, he tells them, that he himself was that food; or that, by his mediation, access to God the head of the spiritual world, was procured for the creature; and that by him as the medium, the intercourse betwixt the Creator and creature, which was obstructed and blocked up by sin, was again opened. And, as to the qualities of this food, he observes two things: first, That it gives life to the world; *i. e.* it restores life, vigour, strength, and activity to the soul, of which it had been deprived by sin: and secondly, that those who eat of it shall never more hunger; *i. e.* shall never be in want of such an abundance of food as is necessary to fit the soul for living as a spirit does: And, in order to convince them of the absolute necessity of the application of this

food to the ſoul, he, with the greateſt peremptorineſs and ſolemnity, aſſerts, in the text, "Except ye eat the fleſh of the Son of "man, and drink his blood, ye have no life "in you."

In diſcourſing upon this ſubject, I propoſe,

I. To ſhew what is meant by the fleſh and blood of the Son of man.

II. To ſhew what is meant by eating Chriſt's fleſh, and drinking his blood.

III. To illuſtrate, that thoſe who do not eat the fleſh and drink the blood of the Son of God, have no life in them.

IV. Conclude with ſome inferences.

I. I am to ſhew what is meant by the fleſh and blood of the Son of man.

The word *fleſh* is uſed in a variety of ſenſes, and applied to different objects in the ſacred records. Sometimes it is uſed to ſignify the body of man, Gen. ii. 24. Man's natural ſtrength, Matt. xxvi. 41. and very often to ſignify the corrupt nature of men, as in Rom. vii. 25. Gal. v. 13. In the text it is applied to Jeſus Chriſt. Our preſent buſineſs therefore, is to conſider in what ſenſe the terms *fleſh* and *blood* are to be underſtood when

when applied to the Saviour. That we may be preſerved from miſapprehenſions of the matter, it will be proper to obſerve:

1*ſt*, That the terms *fleſh* and *blood*, as applied to Chriſt in the text, are not to be underſtood literally or ſacramentally. That the terms are not to be underſtood in this ſenſe is abundantly obvious, from this conſideration, that the food here ſpoken of is provided for the ſoul, and muſt therefore be ſuited to the peculiar nature of it. The animal life, or the life of the body, it is true, is ſupported by its connection and intercourſe with the material ſyſtem, or by material food, which is ſuited to the nature of that life; but the ſoul or ſpirit, cannot be ſupported by groſs material food, becauſe it is not ſuited to its nature as a ſpiritual being. We cannot therefore ſuppoſe, when Chriſt repreſents his fleſh and blood as the proper food of the ſpirit, that he means that the ſoul or ſpirit of a man muſt feed upon his fleſh as fleſh, or drink of his blood as blood. It is acknowledged, indeed, that in the ordinance of the ſupper, the communicant feeds upon the body and blood of Chriſt; but to ſay that the communicant does ſo in a literal ſenſe, leads us headlong into the monſtrous doctrine of the church of Rome on this head. As the intercourſe

courſe in this ordinance is not between the body of Chriſt and the body of the communicant; but between the ſpirit of Chriſt and the ſpirit of the partaker; ſo the ſupport which he receives is not from Chriſt's material fleſh and blood, but from theſe communications which come from the Spirit of Chriſt to the ſpirit of the worthy receiver. The fleſh and blood of Chriſt muſt not therefore be underſtood literally; becauſe, in that ſenſe, they are not proper food for the ſoul.

2*d*, Theſe terms muſt be underſtood to ſignify and expreſs all the fruits and effects of Chriſt's death.

It is the common practice of the ſacred writers, to uſe the cauſe for the effect. This mode of ſpeech is made uſe of in this paſſage. All the bleſſed fruits and effects of Chriſt's death are, in the text, called his fleſh and blood; becauſe the breaking of his body, and the effuſion of his blood, were the purchaſe of them. Now, one grand and principal effect of Chriſt's death was, the opening a new intercourſe betwixt the Creator and the creature, which was intercepted and blocked up by ſin. In this intercourſe the life of a ſpirit can only conſiſt: For as the vegetable life in plants and trees, and the animal life in man and brutes, is ſupported by their connection with

with the material ſyſtem, or the earth, from which they originally ſprung; ſo, by a parity of reaſon, we argue, that the life of a ſpirit, can only be nouriſhed and ſupported by its connection with the ſpiritual ſyſtem, or, in other words, with God the head of the ſpiritual world, from whom it immediately derives its being. This intercourſe, as was ſaid above, was opened by the death of Chriſt, or by the breaking of his body, and the ſhedding of his blood; therefore, his fleſh and blood, in the paſſage, muſt be underſtood to expreſs this, and other effects and bleſſings of his death, which are the only proper food of the ſoul.

II. What is meant by eating Chriſt's fleſh and drinking his blood.

This implies,

1*ſt*, That the ſoul or ſpirit cannot be ſupported without food ſuited unto its nature. It was obſerved, in the introduction, that the body and ſpirit are two diſtinct parts of the human conſtitution; or, in other words, that the animal and ſpiritual life are quite diſtinct from one another; conſequently, they require a diſtinct ſupport. What ſupports the animal, will not ſupport the ſpiritual life. Both

theſe

theſe kinds of life muſt have their reſpective ſupports; for no ſpecies of life whatſoever, can exiſt, for any time, without ſome kind of ſupport.

As we are moſt familiarly acquainted with the animal life, it will be ſafeſt to judge of the ſpiritual life by our ideas of the animal one. Now, our ſenſes, as well as our reaſon, teach us, that the life of the body is ſupported by its connection with the earth, or the material ſyſtem; and, that if you diſſolve this connection, or, which is the ſame thing, deny the body the uſe of food, the animal life will ſpeedily periſh. It follows therefore, that if there is another part of the man which is of a ſpiritual nature, it muſt have ſupports peculiar to its nature alſo, otherwiſe it will periſh. It is true indeed, that the ſoul is immortal, and cannot die, as the body does: Yet, at the ſame time, if its ſupports are withdrawn from it, or if it is ſeparated from God, it is then properly ſaid to die; becauſe it is, in that caſe, as much unfitted for performing its proper actions, functions, and operations, as the body is when its parts are diſſolved. It is for this reaſon, that the ſacred writers ſpeak of ſinners as being ſpiritually dead; becauſe, whilſt they are ſinners they are ſeparated from God who is the ſupport

port of the ſoul; and therefore their ſouls are as properly dead, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, as the animal life is when deprived of its natural ſupport and nouriſhment. It is obvious, then, that the ſoul cannot be ſupported without food ſuited to its nature.

2*d*. The eating of Chriſt's fleſh, *&c.* implies an *appetite* in the ſoul for the food provided, and an actual *application* of this food to the ſoul.

In the animal life there muſt be an appetite and reliſh for its natural ſupports, together with an actual uſing of them, otherwiſe they cannot anſwer the end to the body for which they are provided.---*Appetite*; becauſe if a man has no reliſh or inclination for food, it is not to be ſuppoſed that he will take any: And *actual uſe* of food; for food provided and uneaten, or food looked at only, will not ſupport the body.

In like manner, in the ſpiritual conſtitution, there muſt both be appetite for the ſpiritual food provided, and an actual uſe of it. The ſoul of a ſinner has no appetite for the bread of life: As diſeaſes of different kinds take off the natural appetite, and create in the man a diſreliſh for food; ſo ſin, which diffuſes and ſpreads diſeaſes through the ſoul, takes away its ſpiritual appetite, and creates in it a loathing

ing at the bread and water of life. Now, before the ſoul can have an appetite for its food, this diſeaſe muſt be cured. Sin muſt be taken away; the guilt of it in the ſinner's juſtification, and the power of it in his ſanctification. When the ſinner is happily relieved of this cumberſome load; and when the galling yoke, which ſin has wreathed about his neck, is taken off, then his ſoul is at holy liberty; and, as the hard purſued hart thirſts after the water brooks, ſo will it thirſt and pant after the bread and the water of life.

But not only is appetite for the ſpiritual food neceſſary to ſupport the ſoul, but an actual appropriation of the food to the ſoul. As looking at food, without eating of it, will not ſuſtain the body; ſo neither will barely looking at the fleſh and blood of Chriſt, without eating and drinking thereof, nouriſh, mature, and ripen the ſoul for glory.

3*d*, The *eating* of the fleſh, *&c.* implies that there is ſuch an union eſtabliſhed betwixt Chriſt and the gracious ſoul, and ſuch a conſtant intercourſe kept up between them, as that the ſoul as really feeds upon Chriſt, as a man does upon natural food.

It has been already obſerved, that a guilty creature can have acceſs to God no way but by

by Jeſus Chriſt as Mediator. When the gracious ſoul is by faith united to Chriſt, then Chriſt's life is the ſupport of the believer's life; and the communication and intercourſe which is opened, in virtue of this union, brings down, as it were, from Chriſt, ſuch invigorating, nouriſhing influences, as are to the ſoul what meat and drink are to the body. The ſpirit of the believer, in ſhort, lives upon Chriſt, juſt as the body of a man lives upon meat and drink. What is common to the natural conſtitution, holds equally good with reſpect to the ſpiritual conſtitution. For how does food ſupport a human body? Why; it is by the nutritious parts of the food incorporating with the body. Juſt ſo is it with the ſpirit or ſoul. It is by Chriſt's dwelling in the ſoul by his Spirit, and the ſoul dwelling in him by faith, that the ſoul is ſupported. Hence, ſays Chriſt, "I in you, and you in me," &c. John xv. 4. It is true, indeed, that the ſoul has not at all times the ſame degree of intercourſe with Chriſt, nor the ſame ſhare of communication with him; but it has ſtill, at the ſame time, as much of both as is neceſſary to preſerve its ſpiritual life. Our difficulty in conceiving how a ſpirit, as ſuch, can live and ſupport itſelf upon any object,

is owing to our imperfect ideas of ſpirit. We know how the body or animal life is ſupported, becauſe our outward ſenſes ſhew us, that it is by the uſe of animal food: But it is not ſo eaſy for us to apprehend how a ſpirit unorganized is ſupported. However, it is ſufficient to ſatisfy the humble enquirer in this matter, to obſerve, that it is as eaſy for God to create a ſpirit, capable of living immediately upon himſelf, as to create a body capable of living upon the product of the earth. I now proceed,

III. To illuſtrate, That thoſe who do not eat of the fleſh, and drink of the blood of the Son of God, have no life in them.

I need not inform you, that the life here meant is not the animal life, or the life of the body; but the ſpiritual life, or the life of the ſoul: becauſe the animal life may be preſerved without uſing the food of the ſpiritual life. This then being ſuppoſed, it will appear, from the following obſervations, that thoſe who do not eat the fleſh and drink the blood of the Son of man, have no ſpiritual life in them.

1*ſt*, The

1*ſt*, The life of a ſpirit can only conſiſt in its connection and intercourſe with God the head of the ſpiritual world.

This has been already proved, I preſume, by what has been ſaid in the former part of this diſcourſe. Much, therefore, need not be ſaid upon the matter. Suffice it to obſerve, that as the vegetative life in herbs, plants, and trees, together with the animal life in brutes and human creatures, is preſerved by their connection and union with the earth or material ſyſtem; ſo the life of the ſoul or ſpirit muſt be ſupported by its relation to God, or the ſpiritual ſyſtem. Material beings can only be ſupported by material objects, and ſpiritual beings can only be ſupported and maintained by ſpiritual objects. The preciſe difference betwixt the ſupport of the animal and ſpiritual life ſeems to be this: Both are ſupported by God; but the animal or natural life by the intervention of the material ſyſtem, and the ſpiritual one immediately by God himſelf.

2*d*, When this intercourſe is obſtructed, and this connection diſſolved, the ſoul is then deſtitute of its ſpiritual life, and is incapable of living and acting as a ſpirit does. This follows, by natural conſequence, from the obſervation contained in the preceding particular:

particular: For, if it is the union and intercourſe betwixt Chriſt and the gracious ſoul that ſupports and preſerves the life of that ſoul; when that intercourſe is blocked up, and that union diſſolved, the ſtamina and ſupports of the ſoul are then taken away, and it muſt conſequently fall into a ſtate of ſpiritual death. To illuſtrate the matter familiarly, Suppoſe you ſeparate a branch from the ſtock or trunk of the tree, what is the conſequence? why, it loſes its vegetative life. Deny the uſe of natural food to the body, what is the conſequence? why, the animal life muſt, in that caſe, inevitably periſh. In the ſame manner, ſeparate the ſoul from God; what is the conſequence? why, its ſpiritual life periſhes, becauſe the ſupports thereof are taken away. Or, ſeparate the ſpirit of the believer from the ſpirit of Chriſt his head; what then? why, it muſt wither and periſh, like the branch ſeparated from the tree.

Laſtly, This intercourſe betwixt God and the ſoul of the creature, which was blocked up by ſin, is opened again by Chriſt.

Whilſt the creature retained his innocence, and perſevered in obedience to the Creator's commands, a friendly intercourſe and familiar correſpondence was carried on between them:

them: But as ſoon as the creature deviated from the path of his duty, and ſin entered, then the Creator could no more, conſiſtently with his honour, hold any correſpondence with his guilty creature. That this was the caſe, is plain from the divine procedure after the fall. God baniſhes his creature from paradiſe, thereby intimating, that as he was guilty and ſinful, he could no more carry on that intercourſe with him, which had ſubſiſted between them whilſt his creature was in a ſtate of innocence. Hence it is, that every creature, while in a natural ſtate, is repreſented as being at a diſtance from God; or, which is the ſame thing, in a ſtate of ſpiritual death.

Now, as God cannot, conſiſtently with his nature and honour, approach to a guilty creature, but by or thro' a Mediator, Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of his love, is appointed to that office. It is by him as Mediator, that the intercourſe betwixt God and the creature is again opened, and the whole correſpondence between them, from firſt to laſt, carried on. As God cannot approach to a guilty creature, but by a Mediator; ſo no more can any ſinner have acceſs to God, but in the ſame way. As Jeſus Chriſt, therefore, is the only medium of communication betwixt God and the creature,

creature, thoſe who do not make uſe of the medium can never have any acceſs unto, or friendly communication with the Father. Such as are not intereſted by faith in the death of Chriſt, or who do not by faith eat of his fleſh and drink of his blood, are at a diſtance from God; ſeparated from the ſupports as well as comforts of the ſpiritual life: and therefore the concluſion is abundantly obvious, that all ſuch muſt, in the words of the text, *have no life in them.*

The ſum of the whole argument then is this, That ſince the life of a ſoul can only conſiſt in its friendly intercourſe with God; and ſeeing this intercourſe was blocked up by ſin, and can only be opened by the death of Chriſt, or by his fleſh and blood; thoſe who do not by faith eat of this fleſh, *&c.* have no intercourſe with God, are ſeparated from the ſprings and principles of ſpiritual life; and are therefore as much dead to the actions and operations of this life, as a man is when totally denied the uſe of bodily food and nouriſhment.

IV. From this ſubject I infer,

1. That the ſoul or ſpirit when it arrives at perfection in the next life, is capable of living

living immediately upon God, without the intervention of any medium whatſoever.

That God, by an exertion of his power, can create a being endued with ſuch powers and ſenſations as to be capable of thus living, is beyond all diſpute: And that the ſoul of man, when its powers, faculties, and perceptions are matured into perfection in the world of ſpirits, is one of thoſe beings that thus live immediately upon God, we apprehend, will not admit of a queſtion. The glorified ſoul is repreſented, in that ſtate, as being in the immediate preſence of God, and as being capable of beholding the tranſcendent glories of the Creator, without the aſſiſtance of any medium whatſoever. Oh! my brethren, what a glorious ſcene is this? An innumerable company of ſpirits freed from ſin and imperfection, beholding immediately the effulgent glories of Jehovah, and perpetually ſurrounding the throne with acclamations, and praiſes ſung with celeſtial melody. The ſoul muſt, in that ſtate of perfection, have its ſupports as well as in this. Now, as it is the ſoul's intercourſe with God that maintains and preſerves its ſpiritual life here, it muſt be the ſame intercourſe that ſupports it in heaven; only with this difference that the glorified ſoul lives immediately upon

upon God, whereas here the ſpirit lives upon God, and has acceſs to him only through the medium of ordinances; which leads me to obſerve,

2*d*, That the ſoul, in this life, is comparatively imperfect in its capacities and operations, and therefore lives upon God by or through the medium of ordinances.

The only difference, as was before hinted, betwixt the manner in which the gracious ſoul lives here, and the glorified ſoul hereafter, is, that the laſt lives immediately upon God, and the other has acceſs through a certain medium. This difference in the manner of living, is owing to their different capacities and powers. The ſoul in this life can only approach to God through Jeſus Chriſt, in the ordinances of his inſtitution: Jeſus Chriſt, and his ordinances, are the only medium by which a gracious ſoul, in this life, can approach to and live upon God. Now God, in condeſcenſion to our weakneſs, has been graciouſly pleaſed, in Chriſt, to appoint certain ordinances, through which, as a medium, the gracious ſoul may approach unto, and live upon him. Hence it is, that ordinances are called in ſcripture, *God's gates;* becauſe as a perſon enters into the houſe by the gates or doors; ſo, the gracious

ſoul

ſoul goes into the bleſſed preſence of God by the gates of ordinances. The ordinance we are this day to celebrate is one of the chief of theſe gates, through which the ſoul enters into the preſence of God. Through the elements of bread and wine, as a proper medium, the gracious ſoul draws near to God and the Lamb; is admitted unto his banqueting-houſe, and feaſts upon the dainties and fat things that abound in his houſe.

Laſtly, Suffer me to call upon each of you here preſent, to examine yourſelves upon this important matter. The queſtion that now intimately concerns you all, is, Have I ſpiritual life or not? If you have not eaten of the fleſh, and drunk of the blood of the Son of man; or, if you are not living upon Chriſt through the medium of ordinances, you have, as he declares, *no life in you*. Sinner, I call upon you to attend to this. How dreadful is your ſtate. You have merely an animal life; you live upon the meat that periſhes, but have never taſted of the bread that endureth to everlaſting life. Rouſe yourſelves from your dangerous ſleep. Here is the food of ſouls, angel's food, the bread of life, the fleſh and blood of the Son of God exhibited and held forth to you; and will you ſtill eat huſks with the ſwine? Come,

Put in your head, ugly as it is, among the children of God this day. Come, and ſay, "Lord, here is a poor ſinner now at thy door; he has been feeding upon huſks with the ſwine hitherto, but he would now fain taſte of the bread of life: Lord give me but one morſel of it, that my ſoul may not periſh for ever."

But, perhaps, ſome ſerious exerciſed ſoul, will be ſaying, I juſt feel the ſpiritual life dawning in my ſoul; but, at the ſame time, I feel it ſo weak, that I am terrified it die away altogether; and I feel my corruptions ſo ſtrong, and my heart ſtill ſo hard, that I ſtand trembling in God's gates, and dare not go into his preſence, though I was even ſure he would admit me. Well, dear ſoul, take courage to thyſelf; though you cannot approach to God as you are in yourſelf, yet God will look upon you in the face of Chriſt. Come up to the Mediator; touch but the hem of his garment by your faith, and he will preſent you before God. He will lead you ſafely through the gates of ordinances into the banqueting-houſe, and make his banner over you to be love.

In fine, and to conclude, Are you deſiring life, ſeeking after the means of it? Is life

begun

begun to dawn in your ſouls? Is the ſeed of it begun to ſpring in your ſouls; and are you affraid that it will be choaked? Then come to this quickening ordinance. A ſight of God in Chriſt, through the medium of this ordinance, will ſtrengthen, nouriſh, and cheriſh the ſpiritual life in your ſouls. Do not yield to theſe doubts and fears; do not allow the deceitful whiſpers of temptations to hinder you to do honour to the Redeemer. Lame and halting, and weak and tempted, as you are, ſtill wreſtle forward to Chriſt's table, where there are provided, medicine for the wounds of the ſoul, ſtrength for the weak, relief for the doubting, and a liberal ſupply for the needy. For this purpoſe may God bleſs what has been delivered, through Jeſus Chriſt. Amen.

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE V.

What CONSTITUTES a true CHRISTIAN.

2 COR. V. 17.

Therefore, if any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature, &c.

THE concurrent teſtimony of revelation and experience teaches us, that man is a creature capable of a more noble and exalted way of living than that which he enjoys at preſent. Every one ſeems to admit the neceſſity of ſome change or another, to fit him for a way of living different from the preſent; becauſe it is a plain undiſputable fact, that as his preſent faculties fit him for the way of living he is now in, he could not, without the ſuperaddition of new faculties, or an extraordinary change at leaſt in the old ones, be able to live in any other way.

But

But though men are agreed in this fact itſelf, yet they differ widely in their notions of the nature and quality of the change, and the means neceſſary to produce it. Some aſſert, that by carefully attending to the cultivation and improvement of the old faculties of the ſoul, we may ſo furbiſh them up anew, as to be able to enter upon the moſt perfect way of living a creature is capable of. Others admit the aid of the holy Spirit in the production of this change; but, at the ſame time, plead ſtrenuouſly for ſuch a co-operation on our part, as at leaſt aſcribes as much, if not more, to the creature, than to the energy of the Spirit.

Theſe diſputes would perhaps be eaſily terminated, if men would ſatisfy themſelves with plain facts, as they are laid down in the ſacred records, and with the account given us of the matter, in the ſimple, though expreſſive language of ſcripture. Uniformly throughout theſe records, we find this change repreſented as a *new creation*; and ſuch language and expreſſion is uſed upon the ſubject as leads us obviouſly to ſee, that in the production of this change, as great a change takes place upon the faculties, views, and ſtate of the creature who undergoes it, as in the firſt communication of life and exiſtence

to

to him. This change, or new creation, receives different names and appellations in ſcripture, all which are explanatory of its nature. Sometimes it is repreſented by *putting off the old man, with his corrupt deeds; crucifying the fleſh, with the luſts and affections thereof*; and ſometimes, in order to expreſs the agent employed in producing it, it is called *the workmanſhip of God;* and the effect of it, as in the text, is denominated *a new creature.* He that is in Chriſt, or ſtands in a particular relation to him, is a new creature. The connection betwixt the parts of the text, is abundantly obvious. The relation the man ſtands in to Chriſt, is the cauſe; and the change wrought upon him, ſo that he becomes a new creature, is the effect.

In the beginning of the chapter, the apoſtle vindicates himſelf from the falſe and injurious aſperſions that had been thro n out againſt him by ſome falſe and ſophiſtical teachers that had crept into the Corinthian church. He ſolemnly and expreſly declares, that to whatever motives they might aſcribe his actions, and to whatever impulſe they might aſcribe his zeal; the firſt was owing to his warm regard for their eternal intereſts, and the other to the powerful energy of the love of Chriſt, which conſtrained him; and,

as

as the word implies, like a *reſiſtleſs torrent* bore him away. And in defence of his doctrine, which was likeways impugned and miſconſtructed, he argues, that it was rational in itſelf; becauſe, *If Chriſt died for all*, (which is the leading principle of the new teſtament) then it followed by natural conſequence, that *all were dead*. If this therefore was the caſe, he further obſerves, that no man was entitled to any ſuperiority over another, on account of his nation, extraction, or external privileges; for the goſpel, according to his own phraſe, *knew no man after the fleſh*; and the conſequence of the whole was, that the chief thing which diſtinguiſhed the man in Chriſt from the reſt of mankind, was, that he was actually a new creature, which was not owing to his being a Jew or Gentile, his being of this or the other nation, but his being in Chriſt. I ſhall enquire,

I. What is implied in being in Chriſt.
II. In what reſpects the Chriſtian is denominated a new creature.
III. Draw ſome inferences from the ſubject.

I. I am to ſhew what is implied in being in Chriſt.

1*ſt*, It

1*ſt*, It will not be improper to obſerve, that this relation betwixt Chriſt and the Chriſtian has been explained away, to ſignify a political relation to Chriſt, or ſome ſort of legal title to, or intereſt in the fruits of his death and ſacrifice.

It is true indeed that all this is implied in the relation which ſubſiſts between the Chriſtian and Chriſt. He bears a political relation to Chriſt, in virtue of his being his fœderal head, and in conſequence of his being ſet at the head of the ſecond creation, as the great medium by which ſpiritual and eternal life is conveyed to all who believe in him; and, in virtue of his juſtification, he has likewiſe a legal title to the benefits of his ſacrifice and death: But ſuch an external relation as this, is not at all equal to the extraordinary change produced in the Chriſtian by the relation which he bears to Chriſt; nor does it come up to the ſcriptural account of this relation, or to theſe ideas which the peculiar phraſeology in which the relation itſelf is explained, naturally communicates. This political relation betwixt Chriſt and the Chriſtian, amounts to little more than that which ſubſiſts betwixt a repreſentative and thoſe whom he repreſents; or that between a ſubject and his ſovereign. Now, it very often

often happens the repreſented are quite different in their views, tempers, and ſentiments from the repreſentative; the ſame may be ſaid of the ſovereign and the ſubject. Whereas, uniformly throughout the ſacred records, the Chriſtian is repreſented as being inſpired with the ſame mind that was in Chriſt, with his temper and ſpirit; nay, the idea is carred ſo high, as to intimate that the very life of Chriſt is in the Chriſtian. As this therefore is the caſe, the phraſe *being in Chriſt*, muſt imply in it a much nearer and more intimate relation betwixt the parties, than the idea of a political or moral one can be ſuppoſed to convey: Therefore, we obſerve.

2*d*, That being in Chriſt implies, as real an union betwixt Chriſt and the ſoul of a new creature, as that which is between the man and his life, the ſoul and the body, or Adam and his ſeed.

This carries the relation incomprehenſibly high; and, at the ſame time, all theſe ideas are conveyed to us under the various deſcriptions given in ſcripture of the new creature's union with Chriſt, John vi. 56. "He that "eateth my fleſh, and drinketh my blood, "dwelleth in me, and I in him." This demonſtratively proves, that there is ſuch a mutual intercourſe betwixt Chriſt and the

Chriſtian, as there is between the man and his life; and ſuch a reciprocal inbeing, as there is between the ſoul and the body. It is on account of the ſpirit of life dwelling in the man's body, that he is properly called a living creature; and it is in virtue of the ſoul's union with the body, that he is actuated, and all his motions and actions produced. No body will ſurely ſay, that it is any moral or political relation between theſe parts of the man that produces all theſe effects of a living creature, becauſe this would be abſurd. Now, what is common to the natural creature, holds equally true with reſpect to the new one; for it is in virtue of an actual union betwixt Chriſt and him; or, in the words of the forecited paſſage, by Chriſt's *dwelling in him*, that all the motions and actions of the new creature are produced. Add to this, that this relation betwixt Chriſt and the Chriſtian, is the very ſame as that which ſubſiſts betwixt Adam and his ſeed. The children of Adam bear a political relation to him as their fœderal head; but, at the ſame time, they bear an actual relation to him as his deſcendents; that is to ſay, as having his very life in them, conveyed in what is called the courſe of natural generation; for it is not ſo properly any life of his own

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that actuates and inſpires the creature, as the life which is conveyed to him from Adam. In like manner, the new creature is called *the child of God*, not only becauſe God in Chriſt is his covenant-head, but becauſe he has the life of Chriſt imparted to his ſoul, in what is called regeneration. Upon this principle St Paul argues, in the 2d chap. of the Galatians, "I am crucified with Chriſt: ne-
" vertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth
" in me; and the life which I now live in the
" fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." Here he reſpects himſelf, and in himſelf all Chriſtians, as being both *dead* and *alive* at the ſame time: Now, it is obvious, that the Chriſtian cannot be both dead and alive in the ſame ſtation; therefore the paradox is at once reſolved, when we obſerve, that as a man in Adam he was dead or crucified with Chriſt, and that he was alive in the oppoſite ſtation as a man in Chriſt: Therefore, it follows, that he could only be alive as having Chriſt living in him; ſo that the concluſion is obvious, that there is ſuch a relation betwixt Chriſt and the new creature, as there is between the man and his life, the ſoul and the body, Adam and his ſeed. This leads us further to obſerve,

3*d*, That the relation betwixt Chriſt and the

the new creature is denominated being *in Chriſt*, in alluſion to our being in Adam.

After what has been already ſuggeſted, this obſervation will need little more proof or illuſtration. Suffice it to obſerve, that as Adam ſtood at the head of the firſt creation, and, by the divine conſtitution, was appointed the medium by which life was to be communicated to his natural ſeed; ſo Chriſt, by another conſtitution, was placed at the head of the ſecond creation, and appointed the great medium by which ſpiritual and eternal life was to be conveyed to his ſpiritual ſeed.

Now, as was obſerved above, Adam's children are not only politically related to him as their fœderal head, but more nearly as the channel through which they receive their preſent life, and as having his life actually in them: By a parity of reaſon we conclude, from the conſtitution reſpecting Chriſt, that the new creature is not only related to Chriſt, in conſequence of his being the public head of the ſecond creation, but as having his life actually in his ſoul.

A man is therefore ſaid to be in Adam, becauſe he has Adam's life in him, derived down to him by natural generation; and in reference to this, and in order to expreſs the preciſe analogy between the relation which

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the Chriſtian ſtands in to Chriſt, and that which Adam's children bear to him, the new creature is ſaid to be in Chriſt. This view of the matter at once accounts for the extraordinary difference between the temper, views, and ſentiments of the new and the old creature; For, ſays John, chap. iii. 6. "That which is born of the fleſh, is fleſh; "and that which is born of the Spirit, is "ſpirit." Their original or deſcent makes the difference. Adam, who is of the *earth*, *earthy*, can only produce a creature like himſelf, whoſe views and ſentiments are all confined to this world, and founded upon the objects that appear in it, and can go no farther; whereas Chriſt the ſecond Adam, who is *a quickening ſpirit*, *the Lord from heaven*, is of a divine original himſelf, produces a creature whoſe views of things are all drawn from his knowledge of ſpiritual objects; and the life which he communicates to his creature is like his own, ſpiritual and eternal. The amount of the whole then is this: As there is an actual relation betwixt a man and his life, betwixt the ſoul and the body, ſo is there between Chriſt and the new creature: And as the natural creature is called the child of Adam, becauſe he has Adam's life in him; ſo the new creature is ſaid to be in Chriſt, becauſe he has Chriſt's life living in him.

II. In

II. In what reſpects is the Chriſtian denominated a new creature.

1*ſt*, This has likewiſe been explained away, to ſignify only ſome improvements made by the goſpel in the new creature; or, at leaſt, the lengthening out the life of Adam to eternity.

If this was all that is meant by the new creature, it would be hard to juſtify the apoſtle in giving it that name. Men who are very unfond of any thing that has the appearance of myſtery, have been at great pains to convince us, that the putting off the old man, crucifying the fleſh, and the whole of the apoſtle's language upon this ſubject, are only high ſounding metaphors, repreſenting the change which the goſpel makes in the powers and faculties of the ſoul; and that they mean nothing elſe than the directing theſe faculties to their proper objects. But allowing this to be the caſe; the renovation of the faculties of the ſoul, if it has any meaning at all, muſt imply the giving of new powers to theſe faculties, which requires juſt as much an exertion of creative power, as the very firſt communication of any faculty does; and, therefore, the one is as properly termed a creation as the other. But

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that the new creature does not conſiſt purely in certain improvements made in the old one, or in lengthening out the life of Adam to eternity, is abundantly obvious from theſe two conſiderations, *viz.*

1. An irreverſible ſentence, pronouncing death upon Adam's life, has long ago paſſed the court of heaven. I call it irreverſible, becauſe the laws of God are not like thoſe of men mutable and changeable: one jot or tittle of them cannot paſs away, be abrogated or diſpenſed with; becauſe, like himſelf, they are all perfect. This terrible ſentence therefore, "Duſt thou art, and unto duſt ſhalt "thou return," hangs over the head of the life we receive from Adam, and muſt ſooner or latter be executed upon every one of us, whether we conſent to it or not.

2. We are commanded to "put off the "old man, with his corrupt deeds." This has been conſtrued to ſignify only the putting away our corruptions; or, in the language of the prophet, caſting away our ſins. True indeed, this, but much more, is implied in the precept; becauſe here is a manifeſt diſtinction made between the old man, and his corrupt deeds: which leads us to conclude, that the old man muſt imply the creature itſelf as in Adam; and his corrupt deeds muſt

muſt mean the qualities and parts of that creature. Now, both the one and the other we are commanded to put off; which can mean nothing leſs than the giving up, in terms of the above ſentence, the life of Adam, the old creature, with all its parts and corruptions, into the hands of juſtice, to be finally deſtroyed, in order to make way for putting on the new man, which is created in Chriſt Jeſus.

The matter, then, is abundantly plain: The new creature cannot conſiſt in lengthening out the life of Adam to eternity, or in certain improvements made in the old one; becauſe both theſe are devoted to deſtruction, by an irrepealable ſentence of the great Creator. You muſt either therefore ſuppoſe, that this ſentence is reverſed by an after thought of God; or elſe, that the old creature is ſo repaired and furbiſhed up anew, as properly to be called a new one; or that there is actually a new creature produced in the ſecond creation in Chriſt. The firſt is an unreaſonable ſuppoſition; for, to alledge, that ſome untoward combination of circumſtances, laid God under the neceſſity of altering any of his conſtitutions, diſpenſing with any of his laws, or reverſing any of his ſentences, is to ſink him into the level of a mere

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fallible legiſlator. As this is the caſe, then, you cannot, in the ſecond place, ſuppoſe, that the new creature conſiſts only in improving the old one; becauſe, if the ſentence devoting to death, and the precept commanding to put it off, ſtand unrepealed, the ſentence muſt be inevitably executed. Therefore we muſt conclude, that in the new creation in Chriſt, a new creature is actually produced.

2*d*, He is a new creature, becauſe the life which he receives from Chriſt enters him upon the ſpiritual world, and fits him for the enjoyments as well as the employments of it; whereas, the life of Adam, which he has while a ſinner, enters him into the preſent world, and fits him only for it.

The life of Adam was never deſigned to reach beyond the limits of a preſent world. Accordingly, with it is furniſhed, to the creature that poſſeſſes it, organs and powers proper for taking in the nouriſhments and ſupports of it; and ſuch powers and abilities as fit him both for reliſhing its enjoyments and employments: Further, this life cannot go. The powers, furniture, and faculties of it do not fit the creature poſſeſſed of this life either for reliſhing the enjoyments, or performing the functions of the ſpiritual life.

Hence it is that all Adam's children are dead to the ſpiritual world, utterly unacquainted with it, becauſe they have not a faculty of ſpiritual diſcernment, which is only communicated in the ſecond creation. Widely different is the caſe with the new creature; the life that he receives in the new birth, enters him immediately upon the ſpiritual world. And, together with the firſt communication of this new life, there is alſo imparted to him ſuch furniture as renders him a fit ſubject for that new world upon which he enters; and alſo, ſuch powers and faculties as fit him both for the enjoyments and employments of that life. On this account, therefore, he is properly denominated *a new creature*. For, in conſequence of his entering an inhabitant of the ſpiritual world, he becomes dead to the preſent one. It is to him as if it were not; as if its very exiſtence was extinguiſhed. And, as he is dead to it, ſo is it to him. Its honours, riches, pleaſures, and all its other deceiful baits have no faſcination, charm, or allurement in his eyes; for, as his hopes are not in it, nor his portion either; ſo he has nothing to expect from its favours, or fear from its frowns. Not ſo with the child of Adam. His portion is in this world. All his happi-

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neſs lies in the enjoyment of the creature; and, as he knows no other object more excellent than it, conſequently, all his hopes are founded upon it.

The Chriſtian, therefore, may be called a new creature, becauſe the very purpoſe, deſign, and intention of his life is quite different from that of the ſons of Adam, or the old creature.

3*d*, He is properly called a new creature, becauſe as his life itſelf is different in its kind from that of the child of Adam, ſo is the predominant principle of it.

The life of Adam, or the old man, remains ſtill in the Chriſtian in its eſſence, whilſt he is in the fleſh. But as it does not remain in him in its corruptions, ſo the predominant principle of the new creature's life is quite different from that of the child of Adam. As the happineſs of the laſt conſiſts intirely in the enjoyment of the creature, and all his hopes are founded upon it; ſo his predominant principle muſt be love to that creature, or to this world. On the other hand, as the new creature is entered upon the ſpiritual world, all his happineſs is there: his hopes and his enjoyments are there; conſequently, the governing principle of his life muſt be love to that world where his all is. It is on

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this account that the Pſalmiſt repreſents the child of Adam as crying out continually, with reſpect to this world, "Who will ſhew us "any good" thing? and, on the other hand, makes the prayer and conſtant cry of the Chriſtian to be, "Lord, lift on us the light "of thy countenance." The life of the new creature cannot therefore be the ſame with that of the ſon of Adam, as the governing principle of both is ſo widely different. The firſt, therefore, when compared with the laſt, is on this account properly called a new creature.

4th, The new creature holds his life by a tenure quite different from that of the ſons of Adam. The child of Adam holds his life by law, the new creature intirely by grace. It is true, indeed, both the one and the other receive their reſpective lives from the hand of the Creator; but the grant of them, or the tenure by which they hold them, is quite different, and incompatible with one another. The grant of Adam's life was made to him upon certain conditions, upon the performance of which his life was to be ſecured to him; and the conſequence of a failure, was a forfeiture of life; or, which is the ſame thing, certain death. The grant of life was made to Chriſt, the ſecond Adam, upon

certain

certain terms to be performed by him; yet theſe terms being perfectly fulfilled by him, the grant comes perfectly free and unlimited, and purely in the way of grace to all who are in him. The tenure, therefore, by which they hold their reſpective lives is quite different, nay, altogether incompatible: for the man who holds by law, renounces grace; and the man who chooſes to hold by grace, gives up his holding by law. We may add to this, that the new creature's tenure is as valid and ſure as Adam's would have been had he kept the covenant: Becauſe, though he hold his life by mere grace and favour, yet it is not by the favour of a mutable capricious being, but by that of him whoſe gifts are without repentance. And ſurely, a free gift gives as good a title as law itſelf can. I only add:

5th, That the Chriſtian is properly called a new creature, becauſe he receives his life through a channel quite different from that in which the child of Adam receives his.

It has been already obſerved, that both receive their life from God; the communication of both is the effect of an exertion of creative power, but the medium of communication is different. The old creature receives his by Adam, as the medium of communication,

munication, in the courſe of natural generation; the other receives his by Chriſt, as the medium, in the courſe of what the ſcripture calls regeneration, or the new birth.

It is childiſh and puerile to aſk, in either caſe, why life is communicated in this way. It is enough for us to know, that divine wiſdom choſe this method of communicating both the natural and the ſpiritual life: And we need only add, that life is communicated to the old creature by Adam, and to the new by Chriſt, in virtue of two divine conſtitutions, appointing the one the head of the firſt creation, and the other the head of the ſecond.

To bring into one view then, what has been ſaid: If the life of the Chriſtian, when he enters upon the ſpiritual world; and if the predominant principle of it is different from that of the child of Adam; if he holds his life by a different tenure; and if it is communicated to him through a different channel, he muſt be a new creature, quite different from the old one. I now proceed,

III. To draw ſome inferences from the ſubject.

Inf. 1. That the old life muſt be given up and renounced, before a creature can enter upon the ſecond.

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This obſervation needs but little illuſtration. As long as we are pleaſed with our preſent life, and think ourſelves happy in the enjoyments of it, we will never be diſpoſed to change it for another. Thus, indeed, it is with the child of Adam; he is perfectly ſatisfied with this world; diſpoſed to take in its gratifications and pleaſures; and, until he feels its unſatisfactorineſs, and is convinced that there is ſomething in it that needs to be amended, he will never ſeek a better. It follows, therefore, that the creature muſt renounce and give up this preſent life, before he can enter upon the ſpiritual one. Not that the child of Adam can be ſuppoſed to give up and part with this life, as if he was not in at all; for this cannot be done till he is out of the fleſh altogether: But our meaning is, that he muſt give up with this life, ſo as no more to be governed by the corrupt principles of it; for it is impoſſible for a creature to be governed by the very different principles of both lives at the ſame time: While he is dead to the one, he muſt be alive to the other.

2. That an exertion of divine power is neceſſary to the production of the ſecond life, as well as that of the firſt.

No creature can give life to itſelf. It muſt receive

receive its life and exiſtence from another; neither can any creature, by its own power, change that way of living allotted to it by the Creator: For to ſuppoſe this, would be to aſſert, that a creature can give new faculties to itſelf; and this would be to alledge, that a creature can change its own being. It is obvious, that no creature can live but in that way in which God has placed it, and for which he has given it ſuitable powers and faculties; and whenever it attempts to live in any other way, it muſt die. This being taken as a firſt principle, it will follow, that even ſuppoſing the new creation only to be a change wrought upon the old creature, it requires an exertion of creative power to produce this change, as much as the very firſt creation did. But, if we add to this, that the Chriſtian is a new creature, and has a life quite different, in many reſpects, from the ſons of Adam, it will put the matter beyond all doubt, that creative power muſt be employed in communicating to the creature faculties and powers fitting him for this new life, juſt as it was exerted, at the beginning of all things, in giving powers and faculties for the preſent life and its enjoyments, to the children of Adam.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, That as theſe two lives are ſo different in their nature, the total deſtruction of the one is neceſſary to produce the perfection of the other. It is owing to the oppoſition betwixt theſe two lives, that the Chriſtian life is repreſented under the notion of a *fight* or warfare. The one is called the *fleſh*, the other the *ſpirit*; and they are ſaid to *luſt* one againſt another. Though the dominion of the fleſh is deſtroyed in the Chriſtian, yet its eſſence ſtill remains in him whilſt in this world. And it is the oppoſition which it makes to the Spirit, or the life of Chriſt in the ſoul, that makes it ſo ſlow and tardy in its advances towards perfection in this world. And, indeed, the Chriſtian life can never arrive at maturity, until the very being and eſſence of the life of Adam is intirely extirpated. There is ſomething analogous to this in nature itſelf. Every one knows, that the mother-plant muſt periſh itſelf, before it produces its ſeed. This analogy Paul makes uſe of in 1 Cor. xv. 36. "How can it be quickened, except it die?" In like manner, in the ſpiritual world, the life of Adam muſt firſt periſh and be deſtroyed, before the life of Chriſt in the ſoul can arrive at maturity. This is done at death, when this periſhing life, in terms of the ſen-

tence, returns to the duſt from whence it ſprung at firſt; and then, when this is done, the ſpiritual life has nothing to oppoſe its progreſs, and conſequently immediately approaches to perfection in the world to come.

Upon the whole, then, the great queſtion which nearly concerns you, in view of the buſineſs of this day, is, Are you ſatisfied with the old man, the periſhing life of Adam? or, Have you renounced and put him off? and have you taken up with the life of Chriſt? Are you mourning under its ſlow progreſs; and conflicting with the oppoſition which the remains of the old man makes in your ſoul? If, on the one hand, you are ſatisfied with the preſent life, and pleaſed with its enjoyments, then, I aſk you, what have you to do with the Chriſtian's buſineſs, work, and enjoyment to-day? Go to your huſks with the ſwine, and your duſt with the ſerpent. You have no right to the bread of life, to the Chriſtian's food, and to the proviſion which God has made for his children in his goſpel ſanctuary. But, on the other, hand, if, having renounced this preſent life, you are now ſeeking for, and thirſting after a portion among the children of God, then we invite you to our goſpel feaſt. Come away into Chriſt's banqueting-houſe;

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a morſel of the bread of life will ſtrengthen your feeble, languiſhing ſouls; create in you a reliſh for more, and a greater diſreliſh for the meat that periſheth. Do not be affraid that Chriſt will not receive you, becauſe you have been hitherto ſatisfying yourſelves, like the prodigal, with huſks, in company with the ſwine. His table is open to all who hunger and thirſt, and upon no ſuch conſideration as this will he caſt you out. We, therefore in his name, and by his authority, on this great day of the feaſt, ſtand and cry, ſaying "If any man will, let him come and "drink of the water of life freely," Rev. xxii. 17. "Ho, every one that thirſteth, come "ye to the waters, and he that hath no mo-"ney; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, "buy wine and milk without money, and "without price," Iſai. lv. 1.

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE VI.

ACCESS to GOD by CHRIST JESUS, who is the saving, life-giving, and sanctifying TRUTH.

JOHN xiv. 6.

Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

IT is the peculiar glory and distinguishing excellency of the Christian revelation, that it opens a new way of access to God, and establishes, upon the firmest basis, a close and uninterrupted correspondence betwixt the Creator and the creature.

Since the entrance of sin, and sin reigning in the creature, there could not be, and therefore never has been, any gracious intercourse betwixt the Creator and his degenerated creature: the one could not, consistently with his

honour

honour and holineſs, correſpond with the ſinner; and the other, on account of his depravity, was indiſpoſed to and incapable of it. If a new correſpondence was to be opened, it was, on the above account, neceſſary that it ſhould be begun and carried on by the intervention of ſome medium. It was this that gave riſe to the mediatorial ſcheme; and to the office of Mediator, was Jeſus Chriſt, the only begotten Son of God appointed, as the propereſt perſon to fill that important ſtation. Hence it is, that Chriſt, in this text, and in many other paſſages, ſpeaks of himſelf in language that cannot be underſtood, but upon ſuppoſition that in the ſpiritual world he acts as the great medium of intercourſe betwixt his Father and his ſpiritual ſeed. It is obvious to a demonſtration, that the three characters that he aſſumes to himſelf in the text, are the native conſequence of his mediatorſhip; "I am the way, "and the truth, and the life." The words themſelves compoſe a part of our Lord's valedictory ſpeech to his diſciples. Having apprized them of his leaving them, chap. xiii. 33. he gives them ſome conſolatory exhortations in the beginning of the chapter. He tells them that in his Father's houſe there were many manſions; and that the purpoſe of his

leaving

leaving them was, to prepare a place for them. But that they might not ſink altogether under the dejection, which the very thoughts of his leaving them would naturally occaſion, he adds, that he would come again and receive them unto himſelf, that they might be for ever with him: and that they might be under no miſtake about the matter, he further obſerves, that the place to which he was going, and the way to it, they were already acquainted with. This naturally introduced Thomas's remark in the 5th verſe, and the text as the anſwer thereto. The firſt part of the text is what I have chiefly in my eye; and, in diſcourſing upon it, I ſhall obſerve the method which the paſſage itſelf ſuggeſts, and that is,

I. To ſhew in what reſpects Chriſt is the way.
II. What is implied in Chriſt being the truth?
III. In what reſpects is Chriſt the life?
IV. Draw ſome inferences for improvement.

I. I am to ſhew in what reſpects Chriſt is the way.

1. He is the way of acceſs to and correſpondence with the Father.

We

We obſerved, in the introduction, that, ſince the entrance of ſin, there has been no correſpondence betwixt the Creator and the ſinner: the firſt could not, on account of his holineſs, correſpond with the creature; and the laſt, becauſe of his depravity, was incapable of it. Sin compoſes that dreadful gulph which keeps God at a diſtance from the ſinner; and, until it is removed, there can be no fellowſhip or intercourſe between them.

That the ſinner might be again brought back to God, and the creature reunited to the Creator, Jeſus Chriſt is appointed to the office of Mediator. As ſin terminates the intercourſe betwixt God and the creature, it alſo renders a mediator neceſſary. For, when, upon the entrance of ſin, the communication and fellowſhip betwixt the Creator and the creature was diſſolved, it muſt either be renewed and opened again, or not: If it had never been opened, the infatuated creature muſt have been in miſery for ever; becauſe ſeparation from God, and perfect miſery, are ſynonimous terms: And it could not be opened immediately with the creature himſelf; for God could not, conſiſtently with his own honour, and the regard he bears to his law, maintain a correſpondence with a

guilty

guilty and polluted creature. The alternative, therefore, behoved to be this: Either the diſtance between them muſt remain for ever, or a medium of correſpondence; or, which is the ſame thing, a mediator muſt interpoſe. To this office Jeſus Chriſt was choſen; and it is therefore through him alone that any ſinner can have acceſs to God and correſpondence with him. In a word, as God, according to the goſpel, can only come down to the ſinner, through Chriſt, in a way of mercy; ſo the ſinner can only go up to God in a way of duty. The whole correſpondence betwixt them, from its commencement, through all its intermediate ſtages, to its full completion in the world of ſpirits, is managed and carried on by Chriſt as Mediator.

The caſe in the ſtate of primeval innocence was different. The creature then correſponded with God immediately, without any medium; but ſince the introduction of ſin, and the eſtabliſhment of the goſpel ſcheme, no ſinner can poſſibly have any dealings with God but through Chriſt. Hence ſays the apoſtle, Eph. ii. 18. "For through "him we both have an acceſs by one Spirit "unto the Father." The ſame ſentiment Peter hath, 1 Pet. iii. 18. "Chriſt ſuffered, the juſt

"for

" for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to " God," *i. e.* to a new correſpondence with him; and this ſentiment is adopted by Chriſt himſelf in the text, " No man cometh unto " the Father, but by me." Add to this, that we are fully aſſured of Chriſt's ability to execute the arduous taſk, by the apoſtle, Heb. vii. 25. " For he is able alſo to ſave them to " the uttermoſt, that come unto God by " him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make inter- " ceſſion for them."

To ſay no more, he is the way of juſtification, by his blood; and the way of ſanctification, by his Spirit and truth: by his Spirit as the agent, and his truth as the inſtrument.

2. He is the way, in oppoſition to all methods of acceſs to God of human device.

That ſin has rendered God inacceſſible to the ſinner, is a truth acknowledged by all; except thoſe who have been ſo complaiſant to the world as to aſſert, that there is no ſin in it. In conſequence of this, various have been the methods propoſed for procuring acceſs to God; and the fact is, that men have generally aſſerted that to be the true way of acceſs to God, which they wiſhed to be ſo. Some are pleaſed to make uſe of repentance for this purpoſe, without reference

to Chriſt, which can only give it efficacy; and what is the meaning and purport of this ſcheme? It is juſt this, I will take the liberty of indulging myſelf in ſin to day, and I will repent of it to-morrow; which will ſufficiently expiate it. Others, to humour themſelves, and foſter their own pride, are pleaſed to ſay, that our own righteouſneſs or perſonal merit will bring us to God. How futile, puerile, and unphiloſophical is this? What is this but to ſay, that you will bribe God to pardon your ſins, by putting the counterfeit coin of your own righteouſneſs into his hand, as if the Creator's hatred for ſin was ſo ſlight, that a little compenſation will induce him to forgive it. A third ſort, ſtriking into a path ſomewhat different, would have us build our hopes of acceſs to God upon our imitation of the example of Chriſt. A curious ſcheme!—a work the ſinner is as unable to do as to raiſe the dead; for, how is it poſſible a perſon can follow Chriſt, unleſs he have the mind of Chriſt in him? The one is the native effect of the other; and the mind of Chriſt muſt firſt be in a man, before he can follow him. He muſt have the ſame kind of life in him that Chriſt had, before he can have the ſame courſe of life, the ſame way of living with Chriſt.

Now,

Now, in oppoſition to theſe fallacious ſchemes of rendering God acceſſible to the creature, Jeſus Chriſt is ſet up from everlaſting, as the great and only medium of acceſs unto God. For, if the Father has fixed upon a method of approaching him, that method, like all the conſtitutions of God, muſt be unalterable; and therefore, there can be no way of drawing near to God but that which he himſelf has preſcribed. Men may pleaſe themſelves with other methods of their own deviſing, but they are only mere chimeras, and creatures of their own brain; for every creature muſt, of neceſſity, treat with God in the preciſe way which he himſelf propoſes.

When Chriſt, therefore, repreſents himſelf as the way, he muſt be underſtood to mean, that he is not only the way of acceſs to the Father, but the way in excluſion of, and in oppoſition to all others.

II. What is implied in Chriſt's being the Truth?

1. He is in truth, in alluſion to the legal types and ſhadows.

There is a very near connection betwixt the legal and goſpel diſpenſations. The one

is

is introductory to the other. The firſt by inviſible repreſentations ſhadowed forth the primary and ſpiritual parts of the other: And, unleſs this connection is kept in view, we cannot judge with preciſion and accuracy of either. The incarnation of Chriſt, his ſacrifice and death, and the efficacy and effects thereof, and his office under the goſpel, as our great high-prieſt, were all emblematically pointed out by the types and ſhadows under the legal diſpenſation; and it is impoſſible to form any rational ideas of the typical part of the law in general, and the whole ſcheme of ſacrificature under it in particular, without taking in this connection; for, what meaning could there be in the legal types, or what efficacy in the blood of beaſts, to take away ſin, but as ſtanding in connection with, and figuring out the great ſacrifice which our goſpel Prieſt was to offer.

Chriſt, therefore, is emphatically called the truth, in alluſion to the legal types and ſhadows, which were all fulfilled in him. They were only as words, he the great truth they were deſigned to convey. They were the ſhadows, he the ſubſtance.

2. He is the great centre in which all the truths of the goſpel meet; the foundation on which they are built.

As

As the lines drawn from the circumference meet in the centre of the circle, ſo, all the truths of the goſpel concentre in Chriſt. As he is the great truth from which all truth ſprings; ſo he is that truth to which all others refer.

But, if we conſider the goſpel as a fabric or building of ſpiritual truths, we will find that Chriſt is the foundation of it. Every building muſt have a foundation; and on Chriſt, as its baſis, the ſyſtem of truth revealed in the goſpel ſtands. Hence it is called by the prophet, *a ſure foundation*; and it is further ſaid of him, that *no other foundation* than this *can any man lay*. But to ſhew his extenſive uſefulneſs in the ſpiritual edifice of truth built in the goſpel, he is called the *corner-ſtone* thereof, compacting together all the other ſtones in the building; giving ſtrength, firmneſs, and ſolidity to them all. Hence ſays Paul, Eph. ii. 20, 21. "And are "built upon the foundation of the apoſtles "and prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being "the chief corner-ſtone; in whom all the "building fitly framed together, groweth "unto an holy temple in the Lord." In a word, Chriſt, as the truth itſelf, is as neceſſary to give ſanction to the truths of the goſpel, as a foundation, or a corner-ſtone, is to give firmneſs to a building.

3. He

3. He is the revealer and publiſher of truth.

Chriſt is truth itſelf, the eſſence and ſubſtance of it; and in whatever heart the truth is found, he is there the author of it. As the great prophet of his church, he reveals a ſyſtem of truth relating to a ſpiritual world, which we would never have known, had it not been for him. The knowledge, therefore, which any creature has of the ſaving truth, is derived from the diſcovery of it made to the ſoul by Chriſt the revealer of it. By application and ſtudy, it is true, a man may acquire a ſpeculative or notional knowledge of the truth; but the inward, real, and ſanctifying knowledge of it, can only be derived from Chriſt the revealer of it; and the freedom and ſpiritual liberty which the truth gives, ariſes from Chriſt's giving to the ſoul the true knowledge of it. Hence, ſays he, "Ye ſhall know the truth, and the truth "ſhall make you free." Add to this, that as all true ſpiritual light comes alone from Chriſt the great light, ſo all ſaving knowof the truth is communicated by Chriſt the revealer of it.

In a word, Chriſt is the truth, in alluſion to legal types and ſhadows; the centre in which truth meets; the revealer of truth;

and

and the truth in oppoſition to falſehood, error, and deceit.

III. In what reſpects is Chriſt the Life?

1. He is life *externally*, as having fulfilled the terms and conditions of it.

It will not be improper to obſerve here, that, in the ſacred records, the old and new man are ſet in oppoſition to each other; and the one, when compared with the other, is properly denominated a *new creature*. As this is the caſe, they muſt have a different kind of life, and, of conſequence, a different way of living. Hence, ſays the apoſtle, 2 Cor. v. 17. "If any man be in Chriſt, he is "a new creature." A new creature, when oppoſed to and compared with the old one. It is natural to conclude from this, that as their life and way of living are different, the channel through which both live and are conveyed, muſt be different too. Accordingly, we are told, that when the creature had forfeited his paradiſiacal life, God, for his great love wherewith he loved us, was diſpoſed to communicate new, ſpiritual, and everlaſting life to the ſinner. And, that this life might be diſpenſed to its objects conſiſtently with the honour of God's attributes

tributes and law, and lodged in a hand that would not, like the firſt Adam, be in any danger of forfeiting it, he was pleaſed to propoſe the terms and conditions of it to Chriſt Jeſus; and, by an expreſs conſtitution, to ſet him at the head of the ſpiritual world; the inhabitants of which were to be choſen from among the ſons of Adam: Of this office Jeſus Chriſt accepted; and, that he might atchieve the arduous enterprize, he aſſumed the human into union with the divine nature; deſcended to this earth; and by his holy life, meritorious death, and triumphant reſurrection and aſcenſion, fulfilled the terms of life; performed the conditions upon which the gift or grant of life was made by the Father; and removed every obſtruction that might impede a re-admiſſion into the divine favour, and entrance upon this new and ſpiritual life. In conſequence of this, the ſpiritual ſeed of Chriſt have a legal title to life; and Chriſt may be ſaid to be their life externally, having fulfilled the terms of it. But, as no life can be enjoyed without actual poſſeſſion, and no benefit without actual fruition, this leads me obſerve:

2. That Chriſt is the life *internally*, as actually communicating life to his people, and being himſelf the principle of it in them.

This

This is obvious from the general account of the matter in the record, "As in Adam," ſays the apoſtle, "all died, ſo in Chriſt "ſhall all be made alive." Here the parallel betwixt Chriſt and Adam is ſtated with great preciſion: "All died in Adam." We know very well what death the children of Adam underwent by his fall: they loſt their life legally in the eye of law, by his breaking the conditions upon which life was to be ſecured and kept; and they actually loſt their ſpiritual life, by being ſeparated from God, in conſequence of the entrance of ſin. Now, in analogy to this, in the ſecond creation, "all are ſaid to live in Chriſt," *i. e.* all his ſpiritual ſeed; and they live in him juſt in the ſame way that Adam's children died in him. They live in him legally and actually. He is their life in law, as having fulfilled the law or terms of life; and he is actually their life, as dwelling in them. As Adam's children were legally dead in him, on account of his breaking the law; ſo Chriſt's children are legally alive in him, as having fulfilled it: And as the children of the firſt were actually dead in him, on account of their being ſeparated from God by his ſin; ſo, the children of the other are actually alive in

him, as being joined and united to God through him.

Chriſt, then, is the principle of life in the Chriſtian. As the ſoul actuates the body, ſo does this life of Chriſt inſpire and dwell in the ſoul of the new creature. There is ſuch an union betwixt Chriſt and the ſoul of the Chriſtian, as there is betwixt the ſoul and the body, or the man and his life: Hence ſays Chriſt, John vi. 56. "He that eateth "my fleſh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth "in me, and I in him." And in a word, as the old creature is ſaid to live, becauſe it has Adam's life in it, communicated by natural generation; ſo the new creature lives, becauſe it has Chriſt's life, conveyed from him in the courſe of regeneration.

It follows of courſe, that the man who is alive in Chriſt, muſt be dead in Adam; becauſe, he cannot be alive in both at the ſame time. It is not neceſſary that the life of Adam ſhould be entirely deſtroyed; becauſe, in that caſe, no man could be a Chriſtian till he go to heaven; but it is requiſite that Adam's life ſhould be renounced, forſaken, and crucified, that we may enter upon the poſſeſſion of the new and ſpiritual life derived from Chriſt. In this very light Paul repreſents himſelf, Gal. ii. 20. "I am cruci-

"fied

" fied with Chriſt: Nevertheleſs I live; yet " not I, but Chriſt liveth in me: and the life " which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the " faith of the Son of God." He was crucified with Chriſt; had renounced and given up, as a thing devoted to deſtruction, the life he had from Adam; nevertheleſs, he was not a dead man, but alive: and how? as having Chriſt living in him, as a principle of ſpiritual life. Neither, at the ſame time, was the life of Adam utterly extinguiſhed in him, for he was ſtill in the fleſh: but his life was different from that of the children of Adam; for faith was the faculty by which he lived, as ſenſe is that by which the old creature lives.

To bring into one view, then, what has been ſaid, Chriſt is the way of acceſs to God,—in oppoſition to all falſe ways;—the truth, in alluſion to legal types;—the revealer of truth;—and the truth in oppoſition to error;—the great centre of all truth;—the life externally and internally;—and the life in oppotion to that death brought upon us by Adam. I come now,

IV. To draw ſome inferences for improvement.

Inf. 1.

Inf. 1. Is Chriſt the *way?* then "no man "can come unto the Father, but by him." He is the medium by which God correſponds with the creature, and he with God; the centre where an offended God and an offending creature meet, and are reconciled. You cannot, therefore, approach unto God, or have any dealings with him, but through Chriſt. As the high-prieſt entered with blood once a year into the holy of holies; ſo you can never enter into the holy of holies above, but in virtue of our great High-prieſt's having entered into it with blood before you.

I call your profound attention, brethren, to this important point. You cannot have acceſs to God in duties, but by Chriſt; your prayers, unleſs offered upon the altar of his death, will only be a troubleſome noiſe in the ears of Jehovah; your praiſes, if not offered in his name, will be only to God as the howling of a dog; and what ſhall I ſay? your communicating will be as an abomination unto him. But this is not all; as you cannot have acceſs to God in duty, but in and by Chriſt, ſo no more can you have admiſſion into his preſence in heaven, unleſs it be miniſtered to you by your great High-prieſt. How alarming then the thought! No intercourſe with God here, and no enjoyment

joyment of him hereafter. This is the caſe with all who are in an irregenerate ſtate; yea, they are in the hands of an angry God, who is to them, as the apoſtle expreſſes it, *a conſuming fire.* How awful the expreſſion! How tremendous the truth! Sin has kindled the fire of God's wrath in the ſinner's breaſt, which is daily conſuming him, and will continue to do ſo through eternity. Let the conſideration of this warn you againſt coming to God with any of your ſervices, but in the name of Chriſt. As the Father cannot come down to you in a way of mercy, but through the Son, ſo, neither can you go up to God, in the way of duty, but by him alſo. Away then with your preparations, your ſelf-examinations, and your prayers, in point of acceptance on account of theſe; and approach to God in the name of Chriſt, with the publican's language in your mouth, "God be merciful to me a ſinner," Luke xviii. 13.

2. Is Chriſt the *truth?* Then receive him and reſt in him as ſuch.

Chriſt is exhibited in the goſpel as the truth, the ſaving, the life-giving, and ſanctifying truth; and it is your duty, and you are hereby called upon to receive him as ſuch. Lie down at his feet as humble diſciples, and

and receive the truth unadulterated from his hands. Receive nothing for truth, but what has the ſeal of Chriſt enſtamped upon it. Reject every thing as falſehood and error, which has not the ſanction of his authority who is the truth itſelf. Beware of corrupting the ſimple truth as it is in Jeſus with any human mixture; and be careful never to ſeek for the truth in the polluted channel of human wiſdom. Do not ſatisfy yourſelf with a mere hiſtorical belief of the truth. This will avail but little. Wicked men and devils have this belief of the truth as well as you; but pray to God, that he may give you that internal knowledge of the truth, which will make you free, and that belief of it which is ſaving.

Laſtly, Is Chriſt the *life?* Then it follows, that all thoſe who are not joined to him are in a ſtate of death. Yes, my brethren, they are legally and ſpiritually dead:—Legally dead, becauſe their life is forfeited to law; and, in conſequence of their breach of the law, the ſentence is pronounced. Hence, ſays Chriſt, John iii. 18. "He that believeth not, "is condemned already."--Spiritually dead, becauſe they are ſeparated from Chriſt the fountain and principle of life; therefore, ſays Chriſt, "Except ye eat the fleſh of the

"Son

" Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have " no life in you," John vi. 53. This, ſinners, is your caſe; you have merely an animal life, a life derived from Adam, on which a curſe is fixed, and which will never leave it, till it is brought to deſtruction. Conſider this, then, and do not expect to ſpin life out of the bowels of your poor thin cob-web ſervices: Do not imagine, that God will be bribed to give you life by any thing that you can give him as the price thereof. Proud man is not ſatisfied to receive life as the gift of God in Chriſt: No, no, he ſcorns to be ſo much obliged to God, without giving God ſome price or equivalent for it. And what has he to give him for it? Why, ſays one, I will give him my repentance for paſt offences. This will not do, becauſe repentance is the effect of life. Says another, Then, I will give him my perſonal righteouſneſs; this, I think, is a better price for life than repentance. Thou fool! how canſt thou give him what thou haſt not. But, ſays a poor ſinner, I have nothing to give; I have neither good diſpoſitions acquired, nor good ſervices done by me, to purchaſe life; I am therefore ſatisfied to come as a poor mendicant, and to aſk life of God, merely for Chriſt's ſake. Ay, this is the temper and diſpoſition of mind

mind proper for a ſinner. God ſeeks no price, no equivalent for life; he will not barter life with any commodity you can give him. He calls you to come, and buy of him, without money and without price. The gift of God is eternal life; and remember this life is in his Son. He is the channel through which it is communicated; expect it, therefore, only from the Son, and come and receive life at his hands. And, whilſt I invite ſinners to come and receive life by Chriſt, who is the life, permit me to conclude, by calling upon you who have already received life from Chriſt, to let it be known to the world, by walking conſtantly in him. Chriſt is not the miniſter of ſin; for, as he communicates legal life to his people in juſtification, ſo he conveys actual life in ſanctification: And, in a word, come ye happy ſouls, and teſtify your gratitude to Chriſt your life, by eating bread, and drinking wine in remembrance of him. And that theſe inſtructions may contribute to the conviction of ſinners, and the comfort of ſaints, is our earneſt prayer, through Jeſus Chriſt. Amen.

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE VII.

Man's STATE by NATURE, and the WAY of being brought NIGH to GOD.

EPHES. ii. 13.

But now, in Chriſt Jeſus, ye who ſometimes were far off, are brought nigh by the blood of Chriſt.

NOTHING is better calculated to excite humility in the ſoul, on the one hand, and gratitude to God, on the other, than a ſerious, devout contemplation of the complicated miſery we are involved in by the fall, and the glorious privileges we are inveſted with in virtue of our redemption by Chriſt.

The mind, by carefully recounting theſe miſeries and bleſſings, judiciouſly comparing them together, and diſtinctly exploring the ſources from which both ſprung, is naturally led to abhor itſelf, as the cauſe of all its own

miſeries; and to love and reverence the Saviour, as its only deliverer.

It is with theſe views, that the apoſtle, in the beginning of this chapter, reminds the Epheſians of their deplorable ſituation previous to their converſion to Chriſtianity. To keep them in the conſtant exerciſe of humility, under a ſenſe of what they once were, he delineates their heatheniſh ſtate, and marks particularly all the ingredients that compoſed the miſeries of it; and, to animate them to gratitude for what they then were, he tells them, that in Chriſt Jeſus they were brought nigh; and that it was through his blood alone that they were delivered from the miſeries of their heatheniſh ſtate. The whole is emphatically ſummed up in the comprehenſive words of the text. In which, whilſt the apoſtle expreſſes the ſtate of the Epheſians under ſin, he, at the ſame time, leads on their attention to their deliverance from it; and that every ground of boaſting might be taken away, and all riſings of ſpiritual pride ſuppreſſed, he reſolves the whole of their deliverance into the death and ſacrifice of Chriſt.

Thus does the apoſtle, by aſcribing their miſery under ſin to themſelves, teach the Epheſians humility; and, by reſolving their deliverance

deliverance from it into the death of Chriſt, diſcover to them the powerfulleſt obligations to gratitude and thankfulneſs.

It is almoſt unneceſſary to tell you, that though this paſſage has an immediate reference to the Epheſians, it is more remotely to be conſidered as expreſſive of the ſtate of the creature under ſin on the one hand, and of his redemption from it by Chriſt on the other.

It is equally unneceſſary to mention the ſuitableneſs of the ſubject contained in theſe words to the occaſion of our preſent meeting. The exerciſe of the graces of humility and gratitude is eſſential to a ſuitable frame for the Lord's table; and therefore a ſubject of this nature, which has a manifeſt tendency to excite and enliven theſe graces in the ſoul, is ſufficiently adapted to the buſineſs of a communion ſabbath.

We proceed to ſhew,

I. What is implied in being *far off* from God, and what are the diſtinguiſhing effects thereof?

II. What is implied in being *brought nigh?*

III. *How* the creature is brought nigh to God.

IV. Conclude with a few inferences.

I. I am to ſhew What is implied in being *far off* from God, and what are the diſtinguiſhing effects thereof?

Before we proceed immediately to the diſcuſſion of this branch of the ſubject, it will not be improper to obſerve, that the phraſes being *far off*, and *brought nigh*, are made uſe of to expreſs the difference betwixt the religious diſpenſation of the Jews, and that under which the Heathens were. It was the peculiar privilege of the Jews, who were under no ceremonial pollution, or who were cleanſed from their guilt by the bood of atonement, to have free liberty of entering the temple, and converſing with God. Upon which account they are called *a people near unto him.* Lev. x, 3. and he is denominated *a God near unto them*, Deut. vii. 6. To this privilege the Gentiles had no claim, as they wanted the blood of atonement; and therefore, in oppoſition to the Jew's nearneſs to God, they were ſaid to be a far off. This original meaning of theſe phraſes kept in view, will contribute greatly to lead us to diſtinct conceptions of the import of being far off from God.

1. We obſerve, That the creature was originally near the Creator, but that ſin ſeparat-

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ed them, and occaſioned a diſſolution of all correſpondence betwixt them.

In the golden days of innocence, perfect harmony and uninterrupted intercourſe ſubſiſted betwixt the Creator and the creature. That the greateſt familiarity ſubſiſted between them, is obvious from the hiſtory of that ſhort but happy period, tranſmitted to us by the ſacred record, as well as from the then ſtate of the creature. The creature, on account of his rectitude and integrity, was fully capable of communion and correſpondence with his Maker; and he, the Creator, ſuffered no diminution in his honour by carrying on a correſpondence with his innocent ſinleſs creature. In this ſtate matters betwixt them were, till that inauſpicious period when ſin entered into the world. Then, indeed, affairs took a different turn. The intercourſe betwixt them was diſſolved, and their former correſpondence totally intercepted. This is eaſily accounted for. After ſin reared its deformed head in the creature's heart, it became diſhonourable, on the part of God, to continue his correſpondence with him; and, on the other hand, the creature, by his pollution and degeneracy, was rendered incapable of communicating with his Creator. In the days of primeval

val integrity he was fitted for living upon the ſufficiency of God, and fully furniſhed with powers enabling him to live in the way the Creator had then aſſigned him; but as ſoon as ſin entered, he attempted to live independent of God, and in a way different from that which the Creator had preſcribed; loſt his capacity of living in communion with his Creator; and conſequently, all correſpondence between them was brought to a period. Hence it is, that every ſinner is repreſented as being far off from God; totally precluded from intercourſe with him, and therefore deprived of the honour and felicity which naturally ariſes from fellowſhip with God. As thoſe who are locally at a diſtance from each other, have no perſonal intercourſe, nor thoſe either who are not in friendſhip; ſo, in like manner, on account of the diſtance which ſin has occaſioned, and the ſeeds of diſcord which it has ſown betwixt the Creator and his creature, there is no correſpondence or fellowſhip betwixt them.

2. In conſequence of this correſpondence being interrupted, the creature is far off from the principle of ſpiritual life, and therefore incapable either of the actions or enjoyments of that life.

God is the fountain and ſpring of ſpiritual life:

life: It is in him that the Chriſtian lives, moves, and has his being; and it is in virtue of his being near to God, and joined to him, that he is capable of exerciſing the functions of that life. It is the junction of the Spirit of God to the ſoul of the creature that actuates the ſoul, and fits it for living as a ſpirit does; juſt as the union of the ſoul to the body animates the natural man, and fits him for living as a man in Adam. As we are better acquainted with the properties of matter than ſpirit, becauſe the firſt is cognoſcible by our ſenſes, while the ſecond is not; therefore, we know better, how the body, or the old creature, lives, than how the ſpirit, or the new creature, lives: but, as the body is actuated by its union with the ſoul, we rationally infer, by the law of analogy natural to us, that the ſoul lives; or, which is the ſame thing, that the ſpiritual life is ſupported by its union and communion with God.

Hence it is obvious, that whenever God is ſeparated from the ſoul, or all intercourſe betwixt God and the creature terminates, the ſpiritual life muſt immediately periſh; juſt as the natural life would ceaſe to exiſt, upon the ſoul being ſeparated from the body.

From this reaſoning, therefore, we eaſily diſcern

diſcern the conſequence of the creature's being far off from God, or ſeparated from him. It muſt inevitably loſe its capacity of living ſpiritually; and conſequently be rendered unfit for performing the actions, or reliſhing the enjoyments of that life.

Whenever God preſcribes to his creatures a certain way of living, he, at the ſame time, imparts to them the capacity of living in that way; and therefore, whenever they refuſe to live in that way, it is equally certain, that the powers of thus living are withdrawn from them; and that conſequently they are incapable of living in that way, and therefore muſt die. Now, by ſinning againſt God, the ungrateful creature attempted to live in a way different from that which the Creator had fitted him for; on which account God withdrew his influence from him, and conſequently he was at once incapacitated for living in the right way, and unfitted either for the actions or the enjoyments of the ſpiritual life.

Thus, being far off from God, implies, that the creature was once near to God; but, that ſince the entrance of ſin, he is far off from him; and therefore as unfit for the actions and enjoyments of the ſpiritual life,

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as a man, whoſe ſoul is ſeparated from his body, is unfit for that of the natural one.

II. What is implied in being brought nigh?

1. It preſuppoſes, that the cauſe of their disjunction is taken away.

"Can two walk together," ſays the ſacred writer, "and not be agreed?" Before there can be any friendſhip between them, the parties muſt be reconciled, and this cannot be done without taking away the cauſe of their difference. This may eaſily ſatisfy us, that until the creature is reconciled to the Creator, and the cauſe of their ſeparation removed, there cannot poſſibly be any correſpondence betwixt them.

Now, ſin is evidently the cauſe of the creature's ſeparation from God, and muſt therefore be taken away in all its parts, before the one can be brought nigh to the other: The guilt of it in juſtification, and the power of it in ſanctification. It is neceſſary that both theſe parts of ſin ſhould be taken away, otherwiſe the correſpondence betwixt them can never commence. If the guilt of ſin remains, then it would be diſhonourable on the part of God, and inconſiſtent with his

purity and holineſs to correſpond with a condemned criminal; therefore, it is neceſſary that the guilt of ſin ſhould be taken away, which can only be done in juſtification. On the other hand, if the power of ſin is allowed to hold its ſtation in the ſoul, the creature would then be altogether incapable of correſponding with God, as well as unfit for it, on account of his depravity and pollution; and therefore, it is neceſſary that the power of ſin be alſo taken away, which can only be done in ſanctification. It appears evident, therefore, from theſe conſiderations, that the cauſe of disjunction, *viz.* ſin, muſt be taken away, before the creature can be brought nigh to God: and to ſuppoſe that it is taken away, without the creature being both juſtified and ſanctified, is either to ſuppoſe, that a criminal can enjoy the full favour of the judge, or, that a depraved polluted creature is capable of the ſublimeſt ſpiritual intercourſe with God; either of which ſuppoſitions is prepoſterous and abſurd.

2. It implies, That the creature has acceſs to God, and actual fellowſhip and communion with him.

This follows by natural conſequence from the other. For, after ſin, the cauſe of ſeparation

tion is taken away, then there is nothing left to hinder the creature's acceſs to God; and, we may be ſure, that as God inclines the welfare and happineſs of his creatures, he will admit them to the honour and felicity of correſponding with him, when they are capable of it, and when it is no way diſhonourable to him to carry on an intercourſe with them. Thus, then, does the creature's being brought nigh to God imply in it real acceſs to him, in conſequence of the cauſe of the ſeparation being taken away: And this leads me to obſerve,

3. That, in conſequence of having acceſs to God, we come to enjoy communion with him in—Light,—Love,—Joy, *&c.*

Theſe are the inſeparable effects of communion with God. As ſoon as the ſoul is admitted to fellowſhip with God, it is made acquainted with him, conſequently receives the knowledge of him; and his *light*, in the knowledge of divine and ſpiritual objects, encreaſes in proportion to the degree of communion to which he was admitted. This acquaintance with God, by virtue of this new light, immediately begets love to God in the ſoul. The ſinner's ignorance of the nature of God makes him form injurious notions of God, and theſe produce enmity in the

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ſinner's heart againſt him; and nothing can remove this enmity, but ſaving acquaintance with God; and, whenever the ſoul is made acquainted with God, and enters into correſpondence with him, *love* to him is engendered in it.

Add to this, that the creature, when brought nigh to God, has communion with him in *joy*. This is alſo one of the fruits of acquaintance with God. The terror with which the tremendous majeſty of Jehovah ſtrikes the ſinner is removed, by his being brought nigh to him; and a conſciouſneſs of the favour of God, and the ſecurity he has for the continuance of it, through Chriſt, fills him with joy unſpeakable. It is true, a gloom may frequently be caſt upon the Chriſtian's joy, which will occaſion him many hours of heavineſs: no leſs true is it, that his joy may be greater in its degree at one time than at another; nevertheleſs, this is never owing to the ground of his joy being taken away, but to the ſenſe or conſciouſneſs of it being with-held from him, for his trial and improvement.

Thus has the creature, in virtue of being brought nigh to God, communion with him in light, love, and joy. Light begets love, and love begets joy. I now proceed.

III. To

III. To ſhew how the creature is brought nigh to God.

1. In general, it is in Chriſt that the creature is brought nigh to the Creator.

If the correſpondence betwixt God and man, diſſolved by ſin, had never recommenced, the creature would have been for ever in miſery. It was inconſiſtent with the honour of God to enter into a new correſpondence immediately with the creature himſelf; and therefore, it became neceſſary, for the honour of God, and the ſalvation of the creature, that a Mediator ſhould be appointed, through whom, as the medium of communication, they might correſpond together. To this office was Jeſus Chriſt appointed; and therefore, there can be no dealing with God but through Chriſt. Hence Chriſt himſelf ſays, "No man can come unto the Father "but by me," intimating, that every ſoul that means to deal with God, muſt apply to him; and that we muſt firſt come to the Son, before we can go to the Father: for, as he (the Father) does not deal immediately with the creature, but through the intervention of the Son, therefore no creature of Adam's family can deal with God immediately, but only through the ſame medium.

2. Chriſt's

2. Chriſt's ſacrifice and death, or his blood, as the text expreſſes it, is the preciſe channel through which the mercy of God comes down to the creature, and the only means by which the creature is brought nigh to God.

God, through the riches of his love, was diſpoſed to diſpenſe pardon to ſinners, together with ſpiritual and eternal life. At the ſame time, we never can ſuppoſe he would do this inconſiſtently with the claims and prerogatives of his juſtice. To have done otherwiſe, would have been building the glory of his mercy upon the ruin of the honour and dignity of his juſtice.

That life and pardon, therefore, might be diſpenſed to ſinners, conſiſtently with the honour of God's laws and juſtice, the terms of life were propoſed to Chriſt; which were none other than his perfect obedience to the death. Theſe terms Chriſt fulfilled in every ïota, and conſequently ſecured life to all his ſpiritual ſeed, beyond a poſſibility of forfeiture. The fulfilment of the terms upon the part of the Surety ſecures the grant of life, and brings it down to its happy objects, clear of all conditions and obſtructions whatſoever.

This being the caſe, it is evident to a demonſtration,

monſtration, that the preciſe way in which God can come down to the creature in mercy, is the ſacrifice of Chriſt; and that, in conſequence thereof, no creature can be brought nigh to God but through the blood of Chriſt.

Under the law, the Jews acquired a right to enter into the temple, and converſe with God, through the bood of atonement; and, under the goſpel, the ſinner obtains permiſſion to come nigh to God, through the precious blood of Chriſt. Under the law, thoſe Jews only who were free from ceremonial pollution were intitled to an entrance into the temple; and, under the goſpel, it is thoſe only who are cleanſed from legal guilt in juſtification, and moral pollution in ſanctification, that are capable of entering into the preſence of God in ordinances.

IV. I ſhall now conclude with a few inferences.

Inf. 1. That the creature by nature is at a diſtance from God.

How miſerable then muſt be his caſe! For if he is at a diſtance from God, he is far off from every ſource of happineſs and comfort. Take the alarm, then, ye ſecure ſinners; you muſt be deſtitute of ſpiritual happineſs, becauſe

cauſe ye are at a diſtance from the ſpring. The happineſs you have is merely deluſive and imaginary; no better than that which a madman vainly imagines himſelf poſſeſſed of. I call it *imaginary*, becauſe it ariſes only from the enjoyment of the creature, which can afford no true happineſs to the ſoul; and I pronounce it *deluſive*, becauſe it is no real happineſs, but a vain conceit of it, and the ſource from which it ſprings will ſoon dry up.

Inf. 2. No creature can have any dealings with God but through Chriſt.

This likewiſe ſounds an awful alarm, ſinners, in your ears. You are not only far off from God, but likewiſe unacquainted with Chriſt, who can only bring you nigh to his Father; and unleſs you are in Chriſt, you can have no dealings with his Father. Do not be deceived by the vain ſuggeſtions of ſome, who would perſuade you, that all you have to do to procure you acceſs to God, is to ſay you are ſorry for your ſins, and to endeavour to be more tender for the future. Theſe reſolutions are laudable, but they will not procure fellowſhip with God; for a ſentence of condemnation is pronounced upon you, and how can you expect the favour of the Judge, and intercourſe with him, until

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this ſentence is repealed or taken off. God muſt firſt teſtify his willingneſs to correſpond with you; and that he does by offering pardon to you, before you dare preſume to come into any intercourſe with him.

Beware alſo of others, who would make you believe, that if you are juſtified, and pardon beſtowed upon you, you have nothing more to do, and need not care how you live. This is unſcriptural, becauſe it makes the grace of God lead to licentiouſneſs; and it is irrational, becauſe it ſuppoſes a filthy polluted creature capable of correſponding with God. In a word, you muſt be brought to God, in juſtification, before he can correſpond with you; and, in ſanctification, before ye can be capable of correſponding with him. Both the one and the other are through the death of Chriſt, and therefore it follows, that no creature can deal with God but through Chriſt.

Laſtly, Judge of your fitneſs for this ordinance by this diſtinguiſhing criterion: Are you brought nigh, or not?

This is an ordinance deſigned for the friends of Chriſt, in excluſion of all others. The deſign of it is twofold; to do honour to Chriſt, and to perpetuate the remembrance of his death and ſacrifice. Now, the parti-

cipation of this heavenly feaſt, implies in it an expreſſion of love to Chriſt; and, if you are far off from him, you are totally deſtitute of any tender feelings towards him, and therefore are unfit for this ordinance. On the other hand, if you are brought nigh, then you are acquainted with Chriſt, bear love to him in your hearts, and conſequently are qualified for admiſſion to his table. Try yourſelves, therefore, by this diſtinguiſhing criterion, Are you brought nigh, or not? If you are not brought nigh, then what preſumption will it be in you to come to a feaſt to which you are not bidden. If you have not love to Chriſt in your hearts, what ſolemn mockery muſt it be to profeſs love to him in the ordinance of his ſupper. If idols reign in your hearts, what diſingenuity muſt it be to profeſs Chriſt to be your king, by eating bread and drinking wine in remembrance of him? And, to ſay no more, what a ſacrilegious profanation of the body and blood of Chriſt muſt it be, for you who are neither juſtified, nor waſhed, to taſte with your unhallowed lips, and touch with your unſanctified hands, the ſacred ſymbols of both.

Whilſt I mention theſe things, to deter preſumptuous ſinners from this ordinance, I ſhould

ſhould be ſorry, if any humble ſoul were diſcouraged thereby from doing honour to the Redeemer. Methinks, upon a review of what has been ſaid, ſome exerciſed ſoul may be ſaying, "O my light is dim! My "love is languid! and my joy is faint!" Well, dear ſoul, I tenderly feel for you: Do I ſay, I feel for you? I might add, without preſumption, your dear Redeemer feels for you. His ear is open to your groans, he hears your complaints, his heart is pierced with your ſighs. If your light, love, and joy, are dim, languid, and faint; yet if they come from him, they are truly of the right kind, and he will never allow them to be extinguiſhed; and who knows, but he may revive them all in the breaking of bread to-day. Come then to his table, pleading that he would encreaſe your light, love, and joy. And that he may do ſo, is our prayer to God. Amen.

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE VIII.

How DESIRES after COMMUNION with GOD are EXCITED.---How COMMUNION may be OBTAINED.---And how it may be KNOWN.

JOB xxiii. 3.

O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his ſeat!

THE life and hiſtory of Job, exhibit one of the moſt reſpectable characters to be found in the ſacred records. His patience under the moſt complicated diſtreſſes; his behaviour under the treachery of friends; and, above all, his unſhaken faith and truſt in God, juſtly intitle him to a diſtinguiſhed rank amongſt the antient worthies.

In the immediately preceding chapter we find Eliphaz the Temanite accuſing Job of impiety towards God, and oppreſſion and cruelty to his neighbour; and to theſe ſins,

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as their ſource, he aſcribes the holy injured man's afflictions and calamities. To this falſe and groundleſs charge Job makes a reply in this chapter. He heavily complains of the perfidy of his friends, and declares, that their wilful miſconſtruction of his defence of his conduct, rendered his diſtreſſes more keen and pungent, than either his ſighs or his groans could expreſs. "My ſtroke is heavier "than my groaning," ver. 2. Conſcious of his innocence, he ſolemnly makes an appeal to God, and ardently longs to be admitted into his preſence, that he might pour out his complaints before him, and ſolace himſelf in him. The good man had already experienced the incapacity of created enjoyments to ſecure peace and happineſs to his ſoul: The treachery and perfidy of friends had convinced him that theſe bleſſings were not to be found in them; he ſeeks them therefore in God where they are only to be found; and his heaven-born ſoul breathes out itſelf in fervent aſpirations after an interview with God, that he might order his cauſe before him, complain of the injuſtice of his pretended friends, and find that happineſs in him, which neither wealth, worldly proſperity, nor friends, communicate. "O that "I knew where I might find him."

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The words themſelves may be conſidered as containing the breathings of a gracious ſoul, oppreſſed with afflictions, after fellowſhip and intercourſe with God. Such a temper of mind is extremely ſuitable to the occaſion of our preſent meeting, and therefore I hope it will be entertaining and inſtructive to ſhew,

I. What it is that excites in the gracious ſoul ſuch ardent deſires after fellowſhip with God.

II. The medium of communion and intercourſe with God.

III. The effects of communion with God. Then,

IV. Offer ſomething for improvement.

I. What it is that excites in the gracious ſoul ſuch ardent deſires after fellowſhip with God.

It is foreign to the buſineſs of this diſcourſe to prove the reality of communion with God. This is a point clearly eſtabliſhed in the ſacred records, and the united expreſſions of Chriſtians afford them the ſtrongeſt proofs of its truth. I ſhall only obſerve, that if we underſtood the qualities of ſpiritual beings, as well as theſe of material

rial ones, we would have no more difficulty in conceiving of intercourſe betwixt ſpiritual beings, than of that which we daily ſee ſubſiſting betwixt thoſe that are material. We do not deny, that there is an intercourſe betwixt ſoul and body, though we cannot define their mutual operation upon each other; and we ought not therefore to deny that intercourſe which a gracious ſoul has with the Father of ſpirits, though we cannot preciſely ſay how it takes place. Add to this, that as we are ſure the natural life in the ſoul actuates the body, we may rationally conclude, that the ſpiritual life, or Spirit of God, actuates the new creature in the ſoul of the Chriſtian, in a way ſomewhat analogous; though, at the ſame time, we cannot, in either caſe, ſay how they correſpond, or mutually operate upon one another.

Taking, therefore, the reality of communion for granted, I obſerve, that ardent deſires after it are excited in the gracious ſoul by the Spirit of God, giving,

1. A ſenſe of the need of it.

Our deſires after any object are excited in the ſoul by a ſenſe of our need of it, and a perſuaſion that the thing deſired is ſomehow or other neceſſary to us. What is uſeleſs to us, or what we do not ſtand in need of, we

are

are generally indifferent about, unleſs the mind is greatly perverted; whereas, we are impatient for the actual poſſeſſion of that object which we find we ſtand in need of. This was exactly the caſe with holy Job, with reſpect to that intercourſe with God which he ſo ardently breathes for in the text. He had felt the incapacity of worldly enjoyments to give him peace and happineſs; the treachery of friends had taught him that theſe bleſſings were not to be found in them. He was convinced that ſupport and comfort were in God alone; that intercourſe with him could only reſtore tranquillity to his diſturbed mind; and a ſtrong conviction of his need of this intercourſe, under his complicated diſtreſſes, excited in his holy ſoul the moſt ardent deſires after it.

A ſenſe of our need of communion with God, can only excite in our ſouls a deſire for it. As long as we are ſatisfied with the creature, and pleaſed with the enjoyments which it affords, we will never ſeek in the Creator what we fondly imagine we have found in the creature. While ſatisfied with the creature, we do not ſee our need of the Creator, and will therefore have no deſires after him. On the other hand, when we feel the emptineſs of the creature, and the

vanity

vanity of all earthly enjoyments; when we find that the whole creation cannot fill our empty hearts, and are convinced that the happineſs we are aſpiring after is only to be found in God, and in fellowſhip with him, the ſenſe we have of our abſolute need of this intercourſe begets in us a ſtrong impatient deſire for it. The ſame bleſſed Spirit,

2. By a *taſte* of the felicity of communion with God, excites in the ſoul an ardent deſire for it.

A perſuaſion of the worth and excellency of a thing is as neceſſary to excite in the ſoul a deſire after it, as a ſenſe of our need of it. When we are once convinced of the worth of a thing, we naturally wiſh to be in poſſeſſion of it. But if we have experienced its worth in our own caſe, and taſted the ſweets of its enjoyment, our deſires after it are extremely violent when it is withdrawn from us. This is exactly the caſe with the Chriſtian. When he is convinced, that communion with God is neceſſary to his happineſs; the ſenſe of his need of it makes him eagerly thirſt after it: But when it is withdrawn from him, and interrupted for a ſeaſon, after he has taſted its ſweets, then a conviction of the ineſtimable worth of it, renders his deſires for a renewal of it impatient and unquenchable.

Such was Job's caſe. Often had his ſoul been ſolaced with the ſmiles of God's countenance; often had he enjoyed ſweet intercourſe with God; and now that it was withdrawn from, and denied to him, with the utmoſt vehemence of deſire, he cries out, "O "that I knew where I might find him!" In what paſſionate ſtrains does the Pſalmiſt David lament his baniſhment from the temple ſervice, by the unnatural rebellion of his ſon Abſalom, Pſal. lxxxiv. 1. 2. Such exalted felicity he had found in converſing with God in the temple, that he envied the ſparrows who built their neſts in it unmoleſted, whilſt he was not permitted to approach its hallowed gates.

Now, what was it that produced in the holy man theſe vehement deſires? what was the cauſe of his bitter lamentations at this time? Why, my brethren, he had taſted the ſweets of intercourſe with God; the rays of the divine preſence had often beamed upon him; and now, that this intercourſe was denied him, and the clouds had overcaſt his ſun-ſhine, his heaven-born ſoul could not be happy in ſuch a caſe; and therefore he vehemently deſires the renewal of the one, and the removal of the other.

This very naturally accounts for that total

want

want of deſire for communion with God which univerſally prevails amongſt wicked men. They have never ſeen their need of it; they have not taſted the felicity that ariſes from it: and therefore they have no deſires after it.

3. A conviction that miſery is inſeparable from the want of communion, excites a deſire for it.

Man is a creature prediſpoſed by his conſtitution to wiſh for happineſs, and is capable of it. He is uneaſy under the want of it, greedily purſues it, and thirſts for the acquiſition of thoſe objects that are calculated to put him in poſſeſſion of it. But the misfortune is, that in the choice of theſe objects he is generally very unlucky. Ever ſince man's original apoſtacy, he has ſought happineſs in the creature, and his expectations of it have been from that quarter. As long as he imagines that the creature is capable of giving him happineſs, he will never ſeek for it elſewhere. Under this infatuation the ſinner lies, until his ſoul is enlarged; and then he ſees the emptineſs of the creature, feels its incapacity to ſatisfy his deſires, and is convinced that it is only to be found in God, and that without the enjoyment of him he muſt be in miſery. This changes his deſires,

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and the objects of his purſuits too. Forſaking the creature, he now cleaves to the Creator, who is God bleſſed for evermore. Convinced of the emptineſs of the creature, he has recourſe to the fulneſs of the Creator.

Nothing but this view of things will excite deſires in the ſoul after communion with God. When once we are convinced that we muſt be miſerable without God, we are thereby diſpoſed to cleave to him. When the holy Spirit lets the ſinner feel the incapacity of the creature to make him happy, and convinces him that he muſt be miſerable as long as he is far off from God, he earneſtly deſires to be brought nigh him; and the language of his ſoul is, "O that I "knew where I might find him!" Thus does a ſenſe of our need of communion with God, of the worth of it, and the miſery of the want of it, excite fervent deſires after it in the ſoul. We naturally wiſh and long for what we need, what is worthy in itſelf, and what would make us happy.

II. The *medium* of communion and intercourſe with God.

1. Man in innocence needed no medium of intercourſe with God, becauſe he was capable

capable of correſponding immediately with him.

This obſervation requires little proof. Previous to the entrance of ſin, there was nothing to ſeparate God from his creature. Innocent man was, in thoſe halcyon days, capable of correſponding with God, becauſe all the powers and faculties of his ſoul were pure and unſullied. On this account there was no medium of correſpondence neceſſary; for, as the creature was uncontaminated with ſin, he was capable of intercourſe with God; and it was no way inconſiſtent with the dignity and purity of God to admit man to the honour and felicity of correſponding with him. Accordingly we find, that whilſt man retained his primitive integrity, ſweet fellowſhip and uninterrupted intercourſe ſubſiſted betwixt him and the Creator; and, without all doubt, it was this communion and nearneſs to God that conſtituted the chief part of his happineſs in the paradiſaic ſtate. In this happy ſtate matters continued, till that inauſpicious period when ſin reared its deformed head in the creature's ſoul. Then, indeed, the whole correſpondence betwixt them totally terminated, and man was expelled the terreſtrial paradiſe, to convince him, that now, ſince ſin had entered, God could

could no more continue his intercourſe with him; which leads me to obſerve,

2. That as ſin blocked up all communion betwixt God and man, it alſo rendered a medium of correſpondence neceſſary.

It has been already obſerved, that ſin put a period to all communion betwixt God and man; and that, ſince its entrance, there has been no correſpondence betwixt them. The reaſon is obvious: Man, on account of his depravity, was incapable of it; and God could not, conſiſtently with his dignity and immaculate purity, admit him to it. The alternative therefore was this, Either a mediator muſt be appointed, through whom God and man can correſpond, or there muſt be no communion betwixt them. If there had been no communion betwixt them, or, which is the ſame thing, if the creature had been kept at a diſtance from the Creator, he muſt have been in irremediable miſery; becauſe there is no difference betwixt diſtance from God, and abſolute unhappineſs. If the creature then was to be again brought nigh to the Creator, a medium of communion, or, which is the ſame thing, a mediator muſt be appointed; for as ſin terminates the intercourſe betwixt God and the creature, it alſo renders a mediator neceſſary, becauſe

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on account of the pollution of the creature, on the one hand, and the dignity and holineſs of God on the other, he could not correſpond with the creature immediately and by himſelf. This ſuggeſts to me,

3. That Jeſus Chriſt is the Mediator, or that medium by which God and the gracious ſoul correſpond together.

As it was neceſſary for the honour of God and the happineſs of the creature, that a Mediator ſhould be appointed, Jeſus Chriſt the only begotten Son of God is choſen as the propereſt perſon to fill that important ſtation. Accordingly, he is uniformly repreſented in the New Teſtament as the only Mediator betwixt God and man; not only as healing the breach which ſin had made betwixt the Creator and the creature, by his ſacrifice and death, but as carrying on the whole correſpondence betwixt them, from its firſt commencement at converſion, through all its intermediate ſtages, to its completion in the world of ſpirits. No man, therefore, can come unto the Father but by the Son. All the Father's mercies come down to the creature through the channel of the Son, and all his duties muſt go up to God in the ſame way, elſe they cannot be acceptable to him. This view of things ſuggeſts to us a very important

portant thought, namely, that thoſe who are not in Chriſt, have no acceſs to God, nor can have it, until they are brought nigh by his blood.

4. This intercourſe betwixt God and the gracious ſoul, through the mediation of Chriſt, is carried on by the agency of the Spirit, and the inſtrumentality of ordinances.

God's operations, as creator, in the work of redemption, are carried on by the Son; and the Son's, by the Spirit; and the Spirit's by the inſtrumentality of word and ordinances. God the Father comes nigh to the creature through his Son as Mediator; and the Son employs the Spirit in fitting the creature for communicating with God; and the Spirit uſes the word and ordinances as inſtruments in his hand for bringing about this end.

The order in the goſpel is clear and obvious. By the mediation of Chriſt, God is enabled, conſiſtently with his honour, to admit his creature into fellowſhip with him; the holy Spirit, who is the fruit of this mediation, fits the ſoul for communion with God, by ſanctifying it; and he employs word and ordinances in carrying on the proceſs of ſanctification in the creature's heart. In this point of view the matter is repreſented, Eph. ii. 13, 18, 22. "But now in Chriſt "Jeſus,

" Jeſus, ye who ſometimes were far off, are " made nigh by the blood of Chriſt. For " through him we both have acceſs, by one " Spirit unto the Father. In whom you are " alſo builded together for an habitation of " God through the Spirit."

I now proceed to ſhew,

III. The effects of communion with God.

To enumerate the influence which communion with God has upon the gracious ſoul, and to ſpecify all its effects, would be an endleſs taſk. I ſhall therefore ſatisfy myſelf with mentioning a few of the moſt obvious.

1. Communion with God kills and mortifies ſin in the ſoul.

That this is an inſeparable concomitant of communion with God, is abundantly obvious: Communion with God makes us acquainted with him; it inſtructs us in the immaculate purity and unſullied holineſs of his character, and gives us clear and diſtinct views of his unalterable hatred againſt ſin; and our views of theſe things are juſt in proportion to the degree of communion to which we are admitted. The more intimate our communion with God is, and the more frequent our acts of it are, ſo much the clearer will our views

of God's character be; and conſequently, ſo much the greater will be our abhorrence of ſin in all its various ſpecies.

Now, we are very apt to acquire the temper and diſpoſition of thoſe with whom we are moſt frequently and familiarly converſant; to receive their views and ſentiments of things; and, in a word, to hate what they hate, and to love what they love. This is exactly the effect which communion with God has upon the gracious ſoul. When once the creature is made acquainted with God, by communion with him, it becomes enamoured with his holineſs and purity, enters in ſome reſpect into his views of things, hates what he hates, and loves what he loves. This naturally mortifies ſin in the ſoul; becauſe, the more we know of God, the more will we love holineſs; the more we love holineſs, the more will we hate ſin; and the more we hate ſin, the weaker and more feeble will its power be in our ſouls.

2. Communion with God has a natural tendency to promote humility in the ſoul.

That this is another effect of communion with God, is obvious from its native tendency, as well as from a variety of examples furniſhed us in the ſacred hiſtory. The more a ſoul is acquainted with God, the higher

are its conceptions of the divine nature, and the more low are its thoughts of itſelf. The infinite perfection and excellency which it diſcovers in the divine nature, fills it with the ſublimeſt notions of God; and its own defects diſcovered by this communion with God, humbles it in its own eyes.

When Job had the honour of an immediate revelation from God in the whirlwind, it did not puff him up with an high opinion of his own importance. This honour, inſtead of engendering ſpiritual pride in his ſoul, filled him with humility. Hear his ſelf-denied remark upon that incident: "I "have heard of thee with the hearing of the "ear, but now mine eye ſeeth thee; where-"fore I abhor myſelf, and repent in ſack-"cloth and aſhes," Job xlii. 5, 6.

The manifeſt tendency of intercourſe with God to humble the ſoul is alſo evident in the caſe of the venerable Jacob. After he had wreſtled with the Angel of the covenant and prevailed, what is the reflection the good man makes on this aſtoniſhing adventure? Does it breathe the phariſaical ſpirit of ſelf or pride? Does he exclaim, I have had the honour of an interview with God; I have obtained the bleſſing as a reward of my importunity; and God has ſo far diſtinguiſhed

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me as to change my name? My friends muſt now no more know me by the plain familiar name of *Jacob*, but by the more honourable title of *Iſrael*; for as a prince I have power with God, and with men, and have prevailed? No ſuch language as this dropt from the holy man's lips; no ſuch ſentiment as this croſſed his mind. His remark breathes the ſpirit of true unfeigned humility: "I "have ſeen God face to face, and my life "is preſerved!" Gen. xxxii. 30.

The venerable apoſtle of the Gentiles is another inſtance in which it is evident that intercourſe with God always produces humility in the ſoul. Antecedent to his converſion he was a ſelf-righteous Phariſee, and valued himſelf highly upon his attention to external obſervances; but when God revealed himſelf to his ſoul, he is no more the ſelf-righteous Phariſee, but the humble Chriſtian; and, inſtead of boaſting of his attainments, and the honour that had been conferred upon him, he calls himſelf the *leaſt of ſaints*, and the *chief of ſinners*.

3. Communion with God weans the creature and diſengages it from all earthly enjoyments.

As long as we find, or imagine we find, happineſs in the creature, we will be ſatisfied; and

and the enjoyments ariſing from it will engroſs our attention and affection. On the other hand, as ſoon as we feel the emptineſs of the creature, we will naturally be diſpoſed to ſeek that happineſs in the Creator which we cannot find in the creation. Now, nothing ſo effectually teaches us the incapacity of the creature to give us happineſs as intercourſe with God. Communion with God, by teaching us the excellency of the divine Being, his inexhauſtible fullneſs, and that his all-perfect nature is the ſource of all true happineſs, naturally weans our hearts from the creature, makes us diſcontinue our fruitleſs ſearch after happineſs in created enjoyments; and, in a word, eſtabliſhes the heart and affections firmly and inviolably upon God.

This was eminently the effect which communion with God had upon the devout Simeon. He was honoured with a revelation, importing that he ſhould not ſee death, until he had ſeen the Lord's Chriſt. In conſequence of this revelation, he repaired to the temple, where the parents had brought the Child; and, after claſping the celeſtial Babe in his arms, his enraptured ſoul broke out in this grand apoſtrophe: "Lord, now, let-
"teſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, ac-
"cording

"cording to thy word. For mine eyes have "ſeen thy ſalvation," Luke ii. 29, 30. Now, that he had ſeen the Lord's Chriſt, his heart was elevated above created things; the world and all its glory had loſt every charm in his eye, and he wanted immediately to go to heaven. But to draw to a concluſion, I proceed,

IV. To offer ſome thing by way of improvement.

1. From what has been ſuggeſted, we may diſcover the reaſon why ſinners deſire not communion with God. They ſatisfy themſelves with created enjoyments, and therefore do not covet that felicity of which the Creator is the ſource. As they have neither ſeen their need of intercourſe with God, felt the miſery of the want of it, nor taſted its ſweets, ſo they have no deſire after it, nor will they have any until they feel the vanity and emptineſs of the creature.

2. You muſt be in Chriſt, before you can have communion with God.

While you are the mere ſons of Adam, you are enemies to God in your hearts, and therefore can have no fellowſhip with him. As your ſouls are contaminated, and in all your

your faculties polluted by the power of ſin, while in a natural ſtate, you are abſolutely incapable of communicating with God; and, as this is your ſtate, it would be inconſiſtent with the immaculate purity and unſullied holineſs of God, to admit you to the honour and felicity of correſponding with him.

Before a perſon, therefore, is capable of being admitted to communion with God, the cauſe of his ſeparation from God, *viz.* ſin, muſt be taken away in all its parts; for, if any of them remain in their ſtrength, or hold their original ſtation in the ſoul, the creature is incapable of communion with God. This can only be done by Chriſt. In his righteouſneſs we are juſtified, by which the guilt of ſin is removed; by his Spirit we are ſanctified; and therefore it follows, that we muſt be in Chriſt before we are fit for communion with God. Hence naturally follows your duty in view of communicating with God to-day; namely, to caſt away all your ſins, that they may not marr your fellowſhip with the Father and with his Son Chriſt Jeſus. If you hug your luſts, as ſome people do their charity, in their boſoms; and if you allow any one of them to remain undiſlodged in your ſouls, they will effectually ſeparate betwixt God and you.

3. God

3. God admits his people to communion with him in a way of ſovereignty; that is to ſay, he admits them to it, and denies it to them, when it ſeems good in his ſight. Sometimes he is pleaſed to ſurprize his children, by reflecting the chearing rays of his preſence upon them when they are not expecting it; and, at other times, is pleaſed to with-hold them, when the Chriſtian is earneſtly deſiring them. Now, he is pleaſed to admit his children to ſweet intercourſe with him, then to refuſe it. This method of dealing with his people which God uſes, we may be ſure, is juſt, becauſe an all-wiſe Being has choſen it; and though it may give occaſional uneaſineſs and diſappointment to them in the mean time, yet we are ſure it will, in the end, terminate in their advantage; becauſe God, who loves his people, and conſults their welfare, has adopted this method of proceeding with them. The privilege and honour of communion is the gift of God in Chriſt Jeſus: We have no claim upon him for it in law; we cannot demand it as due to our merit; and therefore, God may admit us to it, and deny it to us, when and where he pleaſes: and he does ſo, I am perſuaded, on purpoſe to teach us to receive this ineſtimable privilege as his glorious gift

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in Chriſt. Nevertheleſs, it is our duty to be habitually ready for communion with God; to be daily preparing ourſelves for it, and to be conſtantly ſeeking it: And that he may admit you to it this day, in the ordinance of his Son's ſupper, is our earneſt prayer to God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen!

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DISCOURSE IX.

The DISEASE of SIN, and METHOD of CURE delineated.

JER. viii. 22.

Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no phyſician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

IN the age in which the prophet lived, a great degeneracy had over-run the Jewiſh polity both civil and eccleſiaſtical. The firſt was defaced and corrupted by wrong interpretations of their laws, together with unnatural additions made by tradition to them: And the ſecond was defaced, and its luſtre ſullied, by their invincible propenſity to idolatry, and to the traditionary precepts of the elders. This their defection as a nation, together with their perſonal ſins as individuals; particularly, their obſtinate impenitence, and ſhameleſs ingratitude, juſtly expo-

ſed

ſed them to the divine diſpleaſure. Various methods God tried to reclaim this incorrigible and infatuated people. Some time, nay long, he tried to work upon their gratitude, by beſtowing upon them the moſt eminent national bleſſings; and, when this engine for reclaiming them failed of ſucceſs, he tries to excite their fear, by denouncing the moſt awful threatenings againſt them, by the mouth of his faithful prophet.

In this chapter, the inſpired prophet, 1. exhibits before them, in one view, their complicated ſins, particularly their impenitence, ver. 4. 7. their vain boaſt of wiſdom, and their covetouſneſs, ſecurity, and impudence, ver. 8, 12. 2. In the name of the Lord he denounces vengeance againſt them, ver. 13, 17. 3. In the moſt tender, melting, and pathetic ſtrains, he laments over their deplorable ſituation; and, with the true ſpirit of heavenly eloquence, in the text, whilſt he leads forward their attention to the infallible remedy, he, at the ſame time, feelingly mourns over their obſtinate diſinclination to apply to, and make uſe of the ſovereign balm: "Is "there no balm in Gilead? Is there no phy- "ſician there? Why then is not the health "of the daughter of my people recovered?" In the text the diſeaſe of the Jews is referred

to,

to, which we will afterwards have occaſion to mention. The ſovereign remedy is pointed out: And laſtly, the prophet enquires, Why the health of the daughter of his people is not recovered, when a medicine is provided, ſuitable in its nature, and never-failing in its effects.

It is only neceſſary, by way of introduction, further to obſerve, that the diſeaſe of the Jews, to which the prophet alludes in the text, is emblematical of that ſickneſs and diſeaſe with which ſin hath infected every ſinner; and that the cure provided for them, is typical and figurative of that medicinal balm the precious blood of Chriſt, which God has graciouſly provided for healing the ſpiritual diſeaſes of the ſoul.

I. Let us conſider the *diſeaſe* itſelf.

II. Exhibit to your view the *medicine* and *cure*.

III. Enquire why is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered, when ſuch an infallible remedy is provided? Then,

IV. Conclude with ſome inferences.

I. I am to conſider the *diſeaſe*.

It was obſerved before, that the diſeaſe of

of the Jewiſh nation, mentioned in the text, is to be conſidered as typical of that inveterate and dangerous diſeaſe with which ſin hath infected every ſinner; and that the parallel betwixt the two may be ſtated with preciſion, we obſerve,

1. That the Jews were ſtung with ſerpents and cockatrices. This is obvious from the 17th verſe: "For behold I will ſend ſerpents, "cockatrices among you, which will not be "charmed, and they ſhall bite you, ſaith the "Lord." Theſe were of the moſt venemous and fiery ſort. Their poiſon, when once infuſed into the blood, acts like the moſt raging fire, conſuming and drying up the fluids of the body, and, in a ſhort time, bringing on certain and infallible death. This was the threatening which God denounced againſt this infatuated people, and the ſevere though juſt puniſhment which he inflicted upon them for their complicated guilt, both as a nation and as individuals. A ſimilar puniſhment we find God inflicted upon their anceſtors in the wilderneſs, when they unreaſonably objected to the length and ruggedneſs of the way to the holy land, and ungratefully objected to the lightneſs of the manna. By this method of puniſhing the Jews with poiſonous ſerpents, ſo frequently mentioned

mentioned, I am perſuaded God not only intended to teſtify his diſpleaſure againſt them as a nation, but likewiſe to teach all mankind the dreadful effects of ſin, and that it operates upon the ſoul with as much malignancy as the poiſon of a ſerpent does upon the body. This leads me to obſerve,

2. That the diſeaſe of the Jews, alluded to in the text, is emblematical of that with which ſin infects ſinners.

The poiſon of a ſerpent is an image which God often uſes to expreſs the direful effects which ſin has upon the ſoul: And an emphatic and bold image it is; for what the firſt is to the body, that the laſt is to the ſoul. As the poiſon of a ſerpent, when once injected into any part of the body, will ſpeedily diſſeminate its fatal effects through all its parts, and totally unfit them for performing their reſpective offices in the animal oeconomy; ſo, ſin, though it may at firſt be lodged in one diſpoſition of the ſoul, will ſoon infect all its faculties, and totally incapacitate them for performing their proper functions in the ſpiritual life.

To bring into one view the extenſively fatal conſequences of ſin; to mark the various awful ſymptoms of that diſeaſe with which it infects the ſoul; and to delineate the deplorable

plorable caſe of the miſerable wretch labouring under its malignant influence, would ſurpaſs the power of language, nay, exceed the utmoſt compaſs of thought. I ſhall only ſuggeſt,

(1.) That it darkens the *underſtanding*, and extinguiſhes that ſpiritual light which God at firſt infuſed into it.

The underſtanding is the leading faculty of the ſoul, and was the receptacle of that light and knowledge which God was pleaſed at firſt to infuſe into it. Previous to the entrance of ſin, light, derived from the unclouded fountain thereof, beamed upon the creature's ſoul: But ſince that inauſpicious period when it entered into the ſoul, that light became, and ſtill continues to be dim. That ſin extinguiſhes the light of the underſtanding, is eaſily evinced and accounted for: Man in innocence enjoyed uninterrupted intercourſe with God, and was conſtantly near him; in conſequence of this he received from God, the fountain thereof, ſuch ſupplies of light, as not only preſerved the light in his ſoul undiminiſhed, but gave it an encreaſing luſtre: But, as ſoon as ſin entered, it occaſioned a total ceſſation of intercourſe betwixt God and the creature, and made the beams of the Sun of righteouſneſs ſet in his underſtanding.

ſtanding. As it was the reflection of the rays of divine light upon the ſoul, that illuminated the underſtanding of man in the days of innocence; ſo now that he is fallen, it is the withdrawing of theſe rays that occaſions his darkneſs. As the material ſun enlightens the natural world by the reflection of his rays, and leaves it in darkneſs by withdrawing them, juſt ſo is it with the ſpiritual world, or the ſoul of man: When the Sun of righteouſneſs ſhines upon it, then there is light; and when he withholds his rays, all is darkneſs. In a word, with propriety and energy may we apply to the ſoul under the influence of ſin, what the holy Ghoſt ſaid of the earth, before the creation of light, "Darkneſs is "upon the face of it," Gen. i. 2.

(2.) Sin robs the *will* of its rectitude and integrity.

The will is the ſecond faculty of the ſoul which ſin diſorders and empoiſons. Before the entrance of ſin, the underſtanding ſat upon the throne of the ſoul, giving law to all its other powers, and reflecting its light upon the will, which followed its dictates with alacrity. But the caſe is now altered. The underſtanding having loſt its power of giving light to the will, it muſt be left to wander in the dark. Add to this, that it has

not

not only loſt its guide; but, ſo fatal is the poiſon of ſin, that it hath infuſed a poſitive malignity into it, which nothing can expel but creative power. Hence we find, that the correction and renovation of the will is uniformly aſcribed to the agency of God, Pſal. cx. 3. "Thy people ſhall be willing in "the day of thy power."

(3.) Sin ſears the *conſcience*, and renders it totally incapable of performing its office, and doing its duty in the ſoul.

Conſcience has been, with propriety, called the moral ſenſe of the ſoul; becauſe it acts in the ſame capacity in the ſoul, that the external ſenſes do in the body. Before it was polluted and vitiated by ſin, it not only diſcovered to the man what was duty, and what was not, without any proceſs of reaſoning; but, by an almoſt irreſiſtible energy, animated him to the one, and deterred him from the other. But, as ſome certain kind of herbs have ſuch noxious qualities in them, as to ſtupify the ſenſes, and diſqualify them from performing their reſpective offices; ſo ſin ſtupifies the conſcience, renders it callous and inſenſible, and robs it both of its capacity to diſtinguiſh betwixt right and wrong, and of its inward impulſive power. And the inſenſibility of the conſcience will juſt be in

proportion to the degree of dominion and power which ſin has in the ſoul. When the power of ſin arrives at its utmoſt height in the ſoul, the conſcience is then ſo ſtupid and undiſtinguiſhing, as to call good evil, and evil good. It is for this reaſon that the apoſtle repreſents hardened and impenitent ſinners, as having their conſciences ſeared with a hot iron.

(4.) Sin vitiates all the *affections*, and renders them worldly-minded.

Before the ſoul was empoiſoned by ſin, order and regularity, peace and tranquillity reigned over all the affections. As in that happy period the will obſequiouſly followed the dictates of the underſtanding, ſo were the affections directed by both. But now ſin has introduced diſorder and confuſion into them, deſtroyed their proper balance, and interrupted their peace and concord. Their objects are miſplaced, and their reſpective powers quite enervated. Before the entrance of ſin God himſelf, the inexhauſtible ſource of happineſs, was the object of the creature's affections; but, as ſin has a debaſing tendency, it has rendered them earthly-minded, and made them grovel among the periſhable and fleeting objects of ſenſe. Add to this, that their reſpective powers are quite enervated.

vated. Our love is debaſed, our fears unalarmed, and our hope quite unanimated. In a word, we love what we ſhould hate; do what we ſhould not do; deſire what we ſhould abhor, and abhor what we ſhould deſire.

This is a ſhort but imperfect deſcription of that malignant diſeaſe with which ſin hath infected every ſoul. Its poiſonous ſeeds are deeply rooted in our ſpiritual conſtitution, and its direful ſymptoms have overſpread the whole man; the underſtanding with darkneſs, the will with perverſeneſs, the conſcience with inſenſibility, and the affections with wild diſorder and confuſion.

The dreadful torrent of this malignant diſeaſe the power of angels could never have ſtopped; and, had it not been for the gracious interpoſition of God, it muſt have inevitably terminated in the total deſtruction of the human race. This leads me to another head.

II. To exhibite to your view the *medicine* and *cure*.

1. Chriſt is the phyſician who preſcribes the medicine, and his blood is the medicine itſelf.

It was obſerved in the introduction, that the

the diſeaſe, and cure of the Jews alluded to in the text, is typical of the diſeaſe with which ſin hath infected the ſinner, and the cure which grace has provided. They were ſtung with ſerpents and cockatrices, as ſinners are ſtung with the old ſerpent the Devil, and the cure which the prophet kindly brings to their knowledge is the balm which grew in Gilead, which was a ſovereign antidote againſt the effects of poiſon, and had in it a virtue of aſſuaging the pain of wounds, and healing them. Its medicinal virtues are deſcribed by the prophet, Jer. xlvi. 11. "Go up to "Gilead, and take balm." And in li. 8. "Take balm for her pain, if ſo be ſhe may "be healed."

Now, this medicine preſcribed by the prophet to the diſeaſed Jews, is a beautiful and ſignificant type of the blood of Chriſt, the ſovereign cure for all ſpiritual diſeaſes. As the typical medicine had the virtue of healing the Jews ſtung by ſerpents and cockatrices, ſo the antetypical one is poſſeſſed with a quality of expelling the accurſed poiſon of the old Serpent injected into the ſoul of every ſon of Adam. As it was God the Father who provided this cure for the Jews, ſo it is the united love of God the Father and Son that provides the ſovereign medicine for ſinners:

ners: Hence it is, that Jeſus Chriſt is repreſented as acting in the capacity of a phyſician in the ſpiritual world, endued with will and power to cure the moſt obſtinate diſeaſes of the ſoul. And it is for the ſame reaſon, that his blood is held forth as that ſovereign balm of Gilead, which heals the wounds of the ſoul. "We are not redeemed with corrup-"tible things, as ſilver and gold; but with "the precious blood of Chriſt," 1 Peter i. 18. "In whom we have redemption through "his blood," Eph. i. 7. Wiſe are they who put themſelves under the care of this Phyſician: for he is willing to heal, becauſe he is love; and he is able to heal, becauſe he is God. Happy they who have this infallible medicine; it never can fail of a cure, becauſe it heals as a releaſe to all pains and penalties, and as a purchaſe to put us in poſſeſſion of the forfeited inheritance.

2. It never fails in curing any ſpiritual diſeaſe to which it is applied.

Sin, as has been repeatedly obſerved, is the radical cauſe of all ſpiritual diſeaſes; and therefore, when ſin, the cauſe, is removed, the effect, namely, the diſeaſe, will of conſequence ceaſe. Every wiſe practitioner in phyſic, will firſt try to inveſtigate and remove the cauſe of any diſeaſe ſubmitted to his care,

as

as the only and moſt effectual way of operating a cure. Now, it will be found, that the blood of Chriſt, the ſpiritual balm of Gilead, has in it efficacy ſufficient to remove ſin, the radical cauſe of the diſeaſe, and, of conſequence, to compleat the cure.

Sin conſiſts of two parts, namely, its guilt and power; the one ariſing from the legal, the other from the natural effects of ſin. Now, the blood of Chriſt effectually deſtroys both theſe parts of ſin. The guilt of it is taken away in our juſtification, through the righteouſneſs wrought out by the death and ſacrifice of Chriſt; and its power and dominion are broken in the heart, by the ſanctifying Spirit of Chriſt, purchaſed by his precious blood.

The parts of ſin being thus taken away, and the radical cauſe of the diſeaſe being removed, the effects, of conſequence, muſt ceaſe. The clouds of darkneſs and ignorance which brooded upon the underſtanding, are diſpelled; the perverſeneſs and obſtinacy of the will removed; the ſtupidity and inertneſs of the conſcience corrected; and all the affections ſanctified, and replaced upon their proper objects.

Thus does the blood of Chriſt, by removing ſin, the radical cauſe of the diſeaſe, introduce

troduce a cure, which, though it is not perfect at once, will be finally compleated: Which leads me to obſerve,

3. That this ſpiritual balm of Gilead produces its effects gradually, and at laſt totally extirpates the radical cauſe of the diſeaſe.

Though the cure of the diſeaſe is in the event ſure and certain, yet it is not compleated at once. This is not to be aſcribed to any incapacity in the remedy itſelf, but to the good will and pleaſure of the great Phyſician. The guilt of ſin, it is true, is in its effects all at once taken away in juſtification, when an act of oblivion and indemnity is paſſed upon us by God; for, as the apoſtle ſays, "Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of "God's elect? It is God that juſtifieth," Rom. viii. 33. but its power and dominion, though broken in the ſoul by our ſanctification, is not totally deſtroyed; nor indeed would it be proper, that it ſhould be otherwiſe, becauſe the very eſſence of the Chriſtian life conſiſts in that conſtant conflict which is maintained betwixt the two oppoſite principles of fleſh and ſpirit; and ſhould the firſt be entirely eradicated, there would be nothing remaining to oppoſe the ſecond, and conſequently no room left for the ſpiritual warfare. Nevertheleſs, the cure is daily approaching

proaching to its completion in the Spirit's progreſſive ſanctification, and will at laſt arrive at its full perfection, when the ſubject in which the ſeeds of the diſeaſe remain is totally deſtroyed.

4. The holy Spirit is the agent that applies the cure.

The holy Spirit ſent down on Chriſt's people, is the fruit of Chriſt's aſcenſion; and the important province in the work of redemption which devolves upon him, is the application of the effects of Chriſt's death and ſacrifice to the ſoul; John xvi. 14. "He "ſhall receive of mine, and ſhall ſhew it un-"to you." The reſpective offices of Father, Son, and Spirit, in the work of redemption, are clear and perceptible from the account given us in the ſacred records. On the Father's love is the foundation of the whole ſuperſtructure built; the Son, by his ſacrifice and death, provides the cure for us; and the holy Spirit, by carrying on the proceſs of ſanctification in the ſoul, is daily applying it, and gradually bringing it nearer to its completion. I come now to enquire,

III. Why is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered, when ſuch an infallible remedy is provided?

This

This is an enquiry that nearly concerns us all. We are ſure a remedy is provided, ſuitable in its nature to our diſeaſe, and infallible in its effects; and equally certain are we, that ſpiritual diſeaſes ſtill remain in many uncured. It muſt, therefore, be of importance to enquire into the cauſe of this. It cannot be owing to any natural unfitneſs or incapacity in the medicine provided; becauſe an infinitely wiſe Being, an infallible Phyſician, is the author of it. Surely then, the fault muſt be in the patient himſelf; and, therefore, we obſerve:

1. That this method of cure, as it aſcribes the whole praiſe to Chriſt the great Phyſician, is unpalatable and ungrateful to the proud creature.

Every ſinner, if he is perſuaded he is under any diſeaſe, would wiſh to be rid of it; but, at the ſame time, he has a ſtrong inclination to be his own phyſician. To be cured by the ſkill and medicines of another, is a thought too mortifying to be adopted by the proud, ſelfiſh creature. To inherit the favour and love of God, as the fruit of Chriſt's ſacrifice and death, and not as our own acquiſition, oppoſes the natural bent and corrupt propenſity of the unhumbled ſinner: And, in a word, to be obliged to live by

the righteouſneſs of another, and to correſpond and deal with God in virtue of the Redeemer's mediation, is a doctrine too humiliatory to the worſhippers of human reaſon, and the adorers of ſelf. Hence it is, that this infallible remedy, this balm of Gilead, fails of ſucceſs; becauſe the proud ſelf-ſufficient ſinner will not make uſe of it. How prepoſterous, how abſurd is this! The patient labouring under a ſcorching fever, or pining away under an emaciating conſumption, never eſteems it any diminution of his honour to uſe the phyſician's preſcriptions; and yet, the ſame perſon, when the poiſon of ſin is drinking up his ſpirits, and conſuming away his ſpiritual ſtrength, ſpurns at the infallible remedy; and, like the ſenſitive plant, recoils from the very hand that can only ſupport it. Strange infatuation! that men ſhould reaſon and act ſo very differently in the one caſe from what they do in the other.

2. This infallible cure fails of its effect, by men ſubſtituting other methods of cure in its place, and by neglecting it through careleſſneſs and inconſideration altogether.

As the love of health is natural to us, ſo every man purſues that method of preſerving and reſtoring it which he thinks is beſt calculated

culated to anſwer the end. Hence in ſpiritual matters every ſinner, when revelation tells him that he is diſeaſed, applies that cure which is moſt agreeable to his natural taſte and diſpoſition. In conſequence of this, various have been the remedies which ſinners of different complexions have tried to cure themſelves of the foul leproſy of ſin, and all of them have been in direct oppoſition to the infallible cure which the goſpel preſcribes.

The formaliſt, ſcorning to be obliged to Chriſt for a cure, has recourſe to his round of duties, and vainly hopes to ſpin a cure out of the cob-web and fig-leaf bowels of his religious ſervices. As abſurd this, as it would be for a perſon who had ſwallowed a cup of poiſon, to expect to be cured, by reſolving for the future to avoid the deadly potion.

Next in the liſt of ſpiritual empirics, appears the ſtarch and formal moraliſt, with his amiable diſpoſitions acquired, his benevolence to his fellow creatures, his compaſſion to the diſtreſſed, and his liberal alms to the poor and indigent; and on this, he builds ſanguine hopes of curing all his own diſeaſes, and expiating his guilt. Infatuated mortal! How canſt thou expect to repair the injury thou haſt done to God by doing good to

others!

others! It is thy bounden duty to do all theſe acts of kindneſs to thy fellow men; but this will never excuſe or atone for thy breach of duty to God.

To the moraliſt, ſucceeds him who calls himſelf the penitent, decked with the ſelf-weaved garments of his repentance, and bedewed with the tears of his penitence. Theſe he ſubſtitutes in the place of Gilead's healing balm, vainly imagining that their virtue will heal all his diſeaſes; little ſuſpecting, that his repentance, and his penitential tears, derive their efficacy alone from the precious blood of Chriſt.

In the rear of this motely group, appears the careleſs ſinner, who neglects the precious remedy altogether. And, on his right hand, is the ſecure ſinner, who does not ſee his need of it, and is totally inſenſible of his danger.

Thus, my brethren, is the health of the daughters of God's people not recovered, and the ſucceſs of the remedy blaſted, by one ſet of men ſubſtituting other cures in its place, and by others neglecting and deſpiſing it altogether, I come now,

IV. To conclude with ſome inferences from what has been ſaid.

Inf. 1.

Inf. 1. Hence we may infer the malignity and attrocious nature of ſin.

Come and ſee the diſhonour it has done to God. It rejects his authority, defies his power, braves his threatenings, ſpurns at his laws, and is injurious to his glorious perfections. But this is not all; ſtand ſtill, my dear brethren, and behold that ruinous ſtate to which it has reduced man, God's rational creature. How is his underſtanding darkened! See the thick clouds of ignorance that brood over it. Where now is that clear and unclouded light which once beamed upon it? Behold the perverſeneſs of his will! What is now become of that uprightneſs and integrity which once adorned it? See his conſcience! How callous and inſenſible is it? inſomuch that that vicegerent of God in the ſoul, which once faithfully performed its important office there, is now incapable of diſtinguiſhing betwixt good and evil: And laſtly, Come to drop a tear, a compaſſionate tear over his diſordered affections; inſtead of order and regularity, now wild diſorder reigns among them. Sin is the cauſe of this, and myriads of other deadly evils; and will you give quarter any longer to this deſtroyer of ſouls? Will you lodge in your boſoms any longer that curſed ſeed of the old Ser-

pent,

pent, which has empoiſoned and defiled your whole ſouls?

Inf. 2. Here you may with comfort behold the glorious remedy, the effectual cure provided.

In this ſubject the deadly diſeaſe is diſcovered to you, its fatal and ill-boding ſymptoms deſcribed, and its direful effects, in all their awful extent delineated. This diſcovery, of itſelf, might lead to deſpair; but the gracious God has not left you without hopes: Without hopes did I ſay? nay, he has given you the moſt ſanguine hopes of a cure, by bringing you to the knowledge of an infallible remedy. Here is Gilead's balm which heals every wound. No ſymptoms, however remote, can elude the notice of your omniſcient Phyſician; and no diſeaſe, however deſperate, can exceed the efficacy and virtue of his blood.

Are your underſtandings dark? he is the light of life: Are your wills perverſe? he will make you willing in the day of his power. Is the conſcience ſeared? he will ſprinkle it with his blood: And are your affections diſordered? he will reſtore peace and tranquillity to them, by waſhing them in the fountain of his blood.

Laſtly, In the ordinance of the Lord's ſupper,

per, which we are now about to diſpenſe, you may read your diſeaſe and your cure, as clearly as if written with a ſun-beam. Why was Chriſt's body broken? It was for your ſin, which was your diſeaſe. Why was he bruiſed? It was for your iniquities. Here then is your diſeaſe; but with what holy and enraptured joy may we aſk this queſtion, For what purpoſe was our dear Lord made an offering for ſin? Angels and archangels hear the joyful anſwer: It was, that by his ſtripes we might be healed.

In this ordinance, then, the two great objects exhibited to your view are, your diſeaſe and the remedy.

Whilſt therefore you ſtrive to be ſenſible of the one, with thankfulneſs and alacrity embrace the other. And that all of us may be enabled to do ſo, is our fervent prayer to the Father of ſpirits, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE X.

Proper MEANS for preſerving the TRUTH and PURITY of the CHURCH of CHRIST.

MARK vii. 13.

Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered.

THE glory of revealed truth conſiſts in its ſimplicity. Nothing ſo much debaſes its dignity, and ſullies its beauty, as the mixtures of human invention with which men blend it. Enveloped in the traditions of men, it is like a precious gem buried amongſt a heap of rubbiſh. Criminal and abſurd as the humour of innovating is, yet we find men early indulging it without reſtraint, either to adapt divine truth to their own particular palates, or elſe to aggrandize their power, and eſtabliſh their importance.

The Phariſees were the firſt who dealt in this illicit traffic. To carry on and accompliſh

pliſh certain ends, and to gain an uncontrouled influence over the deluded people, they corrupted the law of Moſes by their traditions, and buried its glory under the unweildy garments which they manufactured for it. "They taught," as our Lord ſays, "for doctrines the commandments of men." Had their malignant leaven been buried in the ſame grave with themſelves, Religion would not have had ſo much reaſon to put on her widows weeds, and mourn over the loſs of its divine ſimplicity. Their poiſonous ſpittle has been licked up by their genuine ſucceſſors the votaries of the church of Rome, and their pernicious example ſcrupulouſly followed by them. What the one did in the law of Moſes, the other did in the law of Chriſt. The unweildy maſs of corruptions in the Romiſh church gained bulk in proportion as the itch for legendary figments increaſed; until at length ſhe arrived at the monſtrous abſurdity of a wafer God, created by the unintelligible jargon of a prieſt.

The charge which our Lord brings againſt the Phariſees in the text, was occaſioned by their accuſing his diſciples of walking contrary to the traditions of their elders, who were the rulers of the church in former times. They were taught by their traditions never

to eat meat, nor return from the market, without waſhing their hands; and ſo criminal did they eſteem a violation or neglect of this tradition, that their Talmud ranks it with fornication and the fouleſt crimes. Accordingly, when they obſerved Chriſt's diſciples eat meat with unwaſhen hands, they were greatly offended, and accuſed him of conniving with his diſciples in tranſgreſſing the traditions of their elders: "Why do thy "diſciples tranſgreſs the tradition of the el- "ders? for they waſh not their hands when "they eat bread," Matth. xv. 2. Our Lord vindicates his diſciples, by retorting the charge; and accuſes the Phariſees of tranſgreſſing the commandments of God by their ſuperſtitious adherence to their traditions: And, that the juſtneſs of the charge might be proved, he mentions an inſtance in which it was obvious, that their traditions had ſuperſeded filial duty, and diſſolved the obligations of a ſon to ſupport an indigent parent, Mat. xv. 5, 6. "But ye ſay, Whoſoever "ſhall ſay to his father or mother, It is a "gift, by whatſoever thou mightſt be pro- "fited by me; and honour not his father or "his mother, he ſhall be free." Add to this, that their traditions not only run counter to the relative duties, but fruſtrated and rendered

dered of none effect the word of God. Hence our Lord, in the text, accuſes them of making the word of God of none effect by their traditions. The ſenſe of the words is plainly this, That the ſcribes and Phariſees, by their exceſſive and intemperate zeal for the traditions of their elders, diverted mens attention from the law of God; and by repreſenting theſe traditions either as a part of that law, or as of equal importance with it, weakened its obligations, and leſſened its authority.

In diſcourſing upon this ſubject, I propoſe to ſhew,

I. When men may be ſaid to render the word of God of none effect through their traditions.

II. The iniquity, abſurdity, and fatal tendency of this practice. Then,

III. Offer ſomething for improvement.

I. I am to ſhew when men may be ſaid to render the word of God of none effect through their traditions.

I am ſufficiently aware, that as the ſubject ſuggeſted by this paſſage does not partake of the nature of thoſe that are commonly choſen on occaſions of this kind, it may appear to be foreign to the buſineſs of the day. But a little

little recollection will, I hope, diſcover to you that it is both proper and ſeaſonable.—Proper, becauſe, as it is the chief branch of a miniſter's duty, to preach the ſimple unadulterated truth as it is in Jeſus, it cannot, on this occaſion, be an improper or unacceptable ſervice, to diſtinguiſh betwixt the traditions of men, and the infallible truths of God; betwixt the ſimple truth as it is in Chriſt, and the unhallowed mixtures of men: —And ſeaſonable, becauſe this phariſaical humour of corrupting and rendering the will of God of none effect by our traditions, is not yet altogether ſubſided.

Before I proceed, it may not be improper to make one preliminary remark, namely, That by *tradition* I would be underſtood, in the following diſcourſe, to mean theſe things with which men mix the truth, or which they add to it, and would paſs upon others, either as the truth itſelf, or as of equal obligation with it.

1. Men may be ſaid to render the word of none effect by their traditions, when they eſtabliſh fanciful terms of communion of their own invention, and rigidly exact conformity to them, as neceſſary to qualify a perſon for church-membership.

With unabating heat and violence has the queſtion

queſtion concerning the terms of church-communion, been agitated amongſt the different denominations of Proteſtants; while, at the ſame time, the ſolution of it ſeems perfectly eaſy to the man who forms his ſentiments upon the ſacred records alone.

Either Jeſus Chriſt, the ſupreme head of the church, has aſcertained the terms of church-memberſhip himſelf, or not. To ſuppoſe that he has not, is an impious impeachment of his wiſdom; as it implies in it, that he has left an imperfect church, and ſuch a defective code of laws for its government, as need the wiſdom of man to make them compleat. If he has eſtabliſhed the terms of church-memberſhip, then our only province is to find out theſe terms; and, upon finding them, to adhere to them inviolably. No change of time, place, or circumſtances, will juſtify any addition to, or alteration in theſe terms; becauſe, if he has aſcertained them by a poſitive law of his own, it muſt, like all his other laws, be eternal and unchangeable, and conſequently, any addition or alteration muſt not only be unwarrantable, but expoſe the man, who thus wantonly ſports with Chriſt's laws, to the ſevere threatning denounced againſt him who ſhall take away from the words of the book of God,

Rev.

Rev. xxii. 19. Hence it follows, that the cant phraſes ſo commonly hackneyed amongſt us, planting hedges, and fixing boundaries, are mere jargon, the vile ſpawn of Papiſts, nay, blaſphemous; becauſe Chriſt himſelf has planted the hedge and fixed the boundary, and to make it ſtraiter or wider than he has left it, is impious and criminal.

Religious ſociety differs widely in its nature from civil or political ſociety. In the laſt, men may enact ſuch articles and terms of admiſſion into it, as they judge wholeſome and ſalutary, provided they are not repugnant to the civil conſtitution of their country, and do not deſtroy the natural and unalienable rights of individuals. But the caſe with reſpect to religious ſociety is quite different. Men are not left at liberty to chooſe or deviſe terms and articles of admiſſion, becauſe the ſupreme Head of the church, has aſcertained them himſelf; they are in all places, and at all times, the ſame; and conſequently, any addition to, or alteration in them, muſt be unlawful, and mere tradition. If you aſk, What are the terms of admiſſion to church-membership? we anſwer, All theſe who are the children of God, the diſciples of Chriſt, and none elſe, are admiſſible. If you aſk again, What is the criterion by which we

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may diſtinguiſh a child of God, and a diſciple of Chriſt? let our Lord himſelf anſwer, John xv. 14. "Ye are my friends, if ye do "whatſoever I command you;" or, as he ſays elſewhere, "By their fruits ye ſhall know "them." All who prove that they are the friends of Chriſt, by doing what he hath commanded them, and who evince their faith in him by their fruits, are received by Chriſt; and therefore, to reject ſuch, is audacious and preſumptuous. Thoſe who thus prove themſelves to be Chriſtians, are intitled to the common rights of Chriſtians, juſt as a ſubject who proves his loyalty by his practice, is intitled to the protection of government, and to the political rights and priviledges of a ſubject. It is childiſh and puerile to ſay, that this will open the door of church-communion to heretics, and ſuch as are heterodox with reſpect to the capital doctrines of Chriſtianity; becauſe theſe have denied the faith of Chriſt, and are therefore diſqualified for enjoying the privileges and rights which Chriſt has bequeathed to his church.

Upon the whole, then, if any man preſumes to add to the terms of church-membership which Chriſt has preſcribed, he is guilty of preſumption; and, if he diminiſhes from them, he is juſtly chargeable with ſacrilege.

ſacrilege. And, in a word, if he requires any other qualifications than theſe which our Lord mentions as neceſſary to conſtitute a diſciple, he renders the word of God of none effect by his traditions; becauſe, in that caſe, a perſon's right to church-membership is not to be determined by the qualifications which Chriſt has laid down, but by ſuch as his ghoſtly wiſdom is pleaſed to deviſe.

2. Men may be ſaid to render the word of God of none effect by their traditions, when they make theſe things eſſential parts of religion which have no connection with it, and have not the ſanction of Chriſt's authority.

This is a capital branch of the charge which our Lord brings againſt the Phariſees. They taught for doctrines the commandments of men. Theſe ghoſtly guides not only mixed the truths of God with their own traditions, but impiouſly put both upon an equal footing and authority, and made their deluded and unſuſpecting followers believe that the traditions of their elders were eſſential parts of the law of Moſes, and as obligatory as any of its moſt important precepts: nay, ſo keen was their zeal for their traditions, that they took tithe of mint, aniſe,

aniſe, and cummin, while they neglected the weightier matters of the law. Thus did they render the word of God of none effect.

Their ſucceſſors, the Papiſts, determined not to be outdone by the Phariſees, have rivalled them in this moſt infamous traffic. Their innovations in religious matters are too well known to be mentioned, and too enormous to be refuted. Their ſolitary pilgrimages, their cruel penances, their ſuperſtitious faſtings, their idolatrous worſhipping of images, their unanſwered prayers to departed ſaints, with I do not know how much more of ſuch ſolemn trumpery, have ſo encumbered Chriſtianity, that the ſimple truth as it is in Jeſus, is ſcarce diſcovered by their deluted votaries; and ſo tenacious are they of theſe ſuperſtitious traditions, that a breach or neglect of any of them, is reckoned much more criminal and unpardonable than a violation of any natural or revealed duty. Thus do they render the word of God of none effect, by diverting the attention of their blind votaries from what is therein revealed, and making them exerciſe their zeal merely upon their legendary figments.

Chargeable, in ſome degree, with the ſame fault are all thoſe who make political covenants, and the refuſing or receiving certain

civil oaths as eſſential parts of true religion, or requiſite to qualify for church-membership; becauſe this is connecting the ſpiritual kingdom of Chriſt with the kingdoms of this world; an alliance which, in the proper ſenſe of the word, is impoſſible, and incompatible with the genius of Chriſt's kingdom. I do not, my brethren, ſay, that ſuch men, by this practice, make the word of God of none effect; but only that they allow them to occupy too eminent a ſtation in their religious creed. Surely the man on whoſe heart the laws of Chriſt are impreſſed with the finger of divine energy, is as ſtrongly and indiſpenſibly bound earneſtly to contend for the faith once delivered to the ſaints, as if he had entered into a national engagement for that purpoſe; and is not he who has a ſtrong ſenſe of the obligations of his baptiſmal vows, as much bound to ſupport the religion of Chriſt, as if he had ſworn a thouſand civil oaths? Neither would I be underſtood as throwing out any diſreſpectful reflections on the conduct of our heroic anceſtors, who boldly ſtood forth in a time of imminent danger, in defence of our religion, liberties, and laws. With the warmeſt ſenſe of gratitude I ſpeak of them. It is unqueſtionably our indiſpenſible duty to league together in ſupport of our religion

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and liberties, in a time of danger; but when the ſtorm has ſpent itſelf, and the danger is over, to make the doing or not doing of this in a certain way, a qualification or diſqualification for church-membership, is undoubtedly requiring ſomething more to intitle to the common rights of Chriſtians than being a child of God.

In a word, Thoſe who are more zealous for certain forms that are merely the offſpring of human prudence, than for the great truths of Chriſtianity: Thoſe who make certain ceremonies in religious worſhip, eſſential parts of religion, and require conformity to them, as neceſſary to qualify for church-membership: All theſe make the word of God of none effect, and leſſen its duty, and degrade its dignity, by teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

3. Men may be ſaid to render the word of God of none effect by their traditions, when they ſubſtitute articles of faith of their own, in place of the infallible oracles of truth, and exact conformity to them as requiſite to intitle a man to the common rights of Chriſtians.

The Bible is addreſſed to every man as an individual, and out of it he is to learn the articles of his faith, and the rule of his duty.

Conſequently,

Conſequently, every man has an unalienable right to judge for himſelf in matters of religion. One man has no right to dictate to another: This man no right to propoſe to that. Hence ſaith the apoſtle, "Who art "thou that judgeſt another man's ſervant? "to his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth. "But why doſt thou judge thy brother? or, "why doſt thou ſet at nought thy brother? "for we ſhall all ſtand before the judgement-"ſeat of Chriſt. Let us not therefore judge "one another any more," Rom. xiv. 4, 10, 13.

Nevertheleſs, religious bodies have an indiſputed right to agree upon certain articles of faith and rules of government, becauſe this has a tendency to make the bond of union among them firm and ſtrong; neither does it deſtroy the unalienable rights of individuals. But to exact an adherance to this in every punctilio and circumſtantial, or in things doubtful, as requiſite to qualify a man for church-membership, is to ſay, that a man is not a Chriſtian, unleſs he ſees with my eyes.

If a man teſtifies by his fruits that he is a diſciple of Chriſt, he ought to be treated as ſuch, though in things indifferent, and in matters of doubtful diſputation, he may dif-

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fer from his brother. Hence the apoſtle, Rom. xiv. 3. exhorts the converted Gentile who had feeedom to eat all kinds of meat indiſcriminately, not to deſpiſe his brother Jew who ſcrupled to indulge himſelf in that liberty; and admoniſhes the Jew, on the other hand, not to deſpiſe the Gentile for the uſe of his liberty, becauſe God had received both; and therefore they ought not, on account of this circumſtantial difference, to reject one another. To do otherwiſe, is to tranſplant infallibility from Rome, and to eſtabliſh it among Proteſtants. What is this but profeſt Popery. "Tell it not in Gath," &c.

It may be indeed objected, that the perſon may apply to others who will receive him, though he may differ from them in matters of indifference; and that therefore no injury is done him. True; but if he by his fruits teſtifies that he is a diſciple of Jeſus, then ſurely you reject him whom Chriſt has received: And if he is rejected by one ſect, upon the laws of Jeſus Chriſt, he muſt be received by another upon ſome other laws than that of the Head of the church. Thus do ſuch diſhonour ſcripture, and leſſen its authority, by putting their own acts and teſtimonies upon equal footing with it, making them the criterion of orthodoxy, and the ſtandard

ſtandard by which they meaſure their brother's fitneſs and qualifications for the common rights of Chriſtians. Diſhonouring ſcripture, did I ſay; nay, I might add, they render it of none effect, becauſe they ſubſtitute their own noſtrums in its place, and judge of their brother's capacity for church-memberſhip, not by the conformity of his faith and practice to the infallible oracles of truth, but by his adherence to their fallible dogmas.

I proceed to ſhew,

II. The iniquity, abſurdity, and fatal tendency of this practice.

1. It is diſhonourable to Chriſt as the ſupreme head of the church. Jeſus Chriſt, as the ſupreme head of the church, has an unrivalled authority in it. In this capacity he has enacted a ſyſtem of laws for its government, and publiſhed them amongſt mankind. Theſe laws, we muſt ſuppoſe, are good and wholeſome, and applicable to every caſe, becauſe an all-wiſe Being is the author of them. In conſequence of this, any addition to them, muſt be ſuperfluous, becauſe they are complete; and any alteration made in them muſt be ſinful, becauſe they are perfect.

fect. That theſe laws might anſwer the end for which they were enacted, Chriſt has appointed certain officers in his church, and given them a delegated authority to execute and put them in force. Their province therefore, is not to add to the number of theſe, or to alter them, but only to put them in execution, and employ their wiſdom and prudence in adapting the laws to every particular caſe. Theſe therefore, who clog the laws of Chriſt with their traditions, or attempt to make men believe that they are of equal authority with the law itſelf, rob Chriſt of his kingly office, and eſtabliſh an authority in the church in oppoſition to his. Add to this, that by enforcing the practice of ſpiritual duties by civil penalties, they lead men to ſuſpect that the authority of Chriſt is not ſufficient of itſelf to ſecure obedience to his laws; and, by annexing their own traditions to them, they make wicked men ſuſpect that his laws, as he left them, are imperfect. This iniquitous practice is highly diſhonourable to him. It robs him of his authority, and derogates from his infinite wiſdom.

2. It has a tendency to divert mens attention from the one thing needful.

This was the effect which the traditions of the Phariſees uniformly produced. Their exceſſive

ceſſive zeal for the traditionary precepts of their elders, and their unwearied efforts to eſtabliſh the belief and importance of them, led off their own attention, and conſequently that of their deluded votaries, from the weightier matters of the law. Hence they are characteriſed by Chriſt as taking tithe of mint, and other ſmall herbs, while they ſhamefully neglected the weightier matters of the law.

The very ſame effect has the traditionary figments of the church of Rome had upon its infatuated members. Their zeal for their ſanctified traditions, and their external obſervances and ceremonies, has ſo much engroſſed their attention, as to leave little or no ſhare of it for thoſe important objects that immediately belong to our everlaſting peace and welfare.

Human nature is in all ages the ſame, and the ſame objects will generally operate in one way upon it. No wonder then, that the clamour and noiſe about circumſtantials, ſo ſhamefully prevalent in the preſent age, ſhould lead off the attention of too many from the one thing needful. And that this is the caſe will be obvious to every perſon who ſurveys, with an impartial eye, the religious world. The bulk of the diſputations amongſt us, do

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not ſo much turn upon the capital and leading articles of the Chriſtian faith, as upon theſe circumſtantials and matters of doubtful diſputation, which have unhappily divided us into different ſects. One man does not ſeparate from another, becauſe he denies the great doctrines of Chriſt, but becauſe his faſtidious ſtomach will not receive every traditionary pill which his dictator is pleaſed to preſcribe. And indeed, from the complexion of that zeal which generally prevails amongſt us, an attentive obſerver would be apt to conclude, that certain forms, the mere offspring of human prudence, and ſome circumſtantials about which men may differ, and yet be real Chriſtians, were the one thing needful; and that a belief of the diſtinguiſhing precepts of Chriſtianity, and a practice correſpondent thereto, were only matters of ſecondary concern.

This is another baleful effect of an overheated zeal for tradition, on the one hand, and matters of leſſer importance on the other. This muſt be its inſeparable conſequence. For the buſtle that muſt be made, and the artifice that muſt be uſed, before the belief and importance of ſuch things can be eſtabliſhed, lead unthinking people to ſpend their zeal, and exerciſe their attention upon them,

ſo that, in the midſt of the ſtruggle, the one thing needful is forgot. Juſtly may the character given of the laſt age, by an eminent author *, be applied to this, "We are (ſays "he) like a parcel of boys, who, when the "nut is cracked, ſtruggle among the ſhells, "whilſt, in the mean time, the kernel is loſt."

3. It has a tendency to check the progreſs of brotherly love, and to extirpate it altogether.

This heavenly plant flouriſhed eminently amongſt the primitive Chriſtians, becauſe they kept the truths of the goſpel free from all unhallowed mixtures of men, and the pure and unadulterated truth as it was in Chriſt engroſſed the whole of their zeal and attention. Like us, they had their differences in circumſtantial matters; but then they did not make them a ground of ſeparation from one another; and conſequently, they did not obſtruct the courſe of brotherly love.

In proceſs of time, however, when men of aſpiring views contracted the ridiculous humour of dictating to their brethren, and corrupting the truths of Chriſt with their own unhallowed leaven, they differed, as might well be ſuppoſed; and, of conſequence, the brotherly love of many waxed cold. This was;

* Sir Matthew Hale.

was, and muſt always be the caſe, when mens zeal for traditions, and matters of leſſer importance, is greater than for the ſimple truth itſelf. Becauſe this involves the church of Chriſt in a variety of diſputes, equally endleſs as unimportant; and theſe diſputes, by being violently agitated on each ſide, naturally embitter mens ſpirits, rankle their tempers, and conſequently intercept the progreſs of brotherly love. That this is the effect of an unreaſonable attachment to circumſtantials and matters of doubtful diſputation, is obvious from fact, as well as from the natural tendency of the thing. For had men kept clear of this fooliſh caprice, and exerted their zeal upon the cardinal and diſtinguiſhing articles of Chriſtianity alone, there would have been fewer differences and diſputes amongſt us, and conſequently more brotherly love and reciprocal affection.

4. It has a tendency to introduce wild confuſion and diſorder into the church of Chriſt.

This is ſo obvious, that it requires little proof or illuſtration. If one ſet of men arrogate to themſelves a liberty of making any thing they pleaſe eſſential to religion, ſo may another. If one man chooſes to make this particular noſtrum a term of Chriſtian communion,

munion, a ſecond may chooſe to make that: For if one man has a right to do this, ſo has another, and ſo have all; and the one has no right to be angry with his brother for taking the ſame liberty that he takes to himſelf.

This criminal liberty, it is abundantly obvious, muſt be productive of wild diſorder and confuſion, and leave the truth as it is in Jeſus quite undetermined, and the terms of admiſſion to church-memberſhip altogether vague and unſettled. While men are ſo capricious as not to reſt ſatisfied with the ſimple truth as it is in Chriſt, without mixing and adulterating it with their own traditions, and while they require qualifications for church-memberſhip beſides thoſe that are preſcribed by Chriſt himſelf, it is impoſſible to ſet any bounds to this innovating ſpirit, or to ſay to what wild extravagance it may arrive. Nothing will prevent its pernicious effects, nor ſtem its impetuous torrent, but a firm adherence to the infallible oracles of truth, and a careful attention to what is therein revealed.

Having thus diſcuſſed the two departments of the diſcourſe, I ſhall,

III. Conclude with a few inferences.

Inf. 1.

Inf. 1. It ought to be our ſtudy to receive, as humble diſciples, the truth unadulterated from Chriſt's hands.

Jeſus Chriſt is the truth itſelf, the very ſubſtance and eſſence of it. Add to this, that he is the revealer of it, and therefore all true genuine knowledge of it muſt come from him. Hence it is your duty, as humble diſciples, to lie down at his feet, and receive the truth unadulterated from his hands. Embrace every thing as truth that has the ſanction of his authority, and reject as tradition, falſehood, and error, what has not the ſeal of Chriſt enſtamped upon it. The infallible oracles of truth are acceſſible to each of you. They are not, as in the inauſpicious days of Popery, confined within the walls of the gloomy cells of monks and prieſts, but open to every individual. Endeavour therefore to improve this ineſtimable privilege, by ſearching them, as our Lord exhorts, becauſe they are they which teſtify of him. When you can draw the pure water from the fountain itſelf, never take it from the ſtreams. You are ſure to receive it pure, and without any mixture, at the fountain: Go there therefore for it, becauſe you know not how far the ſtreams may be defiled and polluted.

Inf. 2.

Inf. 2. Be careful to diſtinguiſh betwixt the ſimple truth as it is in Jeſus, and the traditions and inventions of men.

The infallible oracles of truth, as was obſerved above, are open to your peruſal, and acceſſible to each of you. A careful, attentive, and impartial peruſal of them, will, through the divine bleſſing, enable you to diſcover the whole of revealed truth; and it is only by ſearching the ſcriptures that you can diſtinguiſh betwixt the truth itſelf, and the traditions of men. If you extract your notions of revealed truth from the ſacred records alone, you will ſtand a fair chance of coming at the truth, and be in little hazard of confounding it with the mixtures and traditions of men. Whatever you find revealed in the ſacred oracles, embrace and receive as truth; and whatever wants the ſanction of their authority reject, though it ſhould be recommended to your attention and belief by the moſt reſpectable names.

It is not the province of miniſters to diſcover the ſacred truth to men, but only to explain to, and inculcate upon them the truth as it is already revealed by Jeſus Chriſt, who is the truth itſelf. You have an equal right with us who are miniſters to ſearch the ſcriptures, in order to diſcover the truth; and if

you do not exerciſe this right, you are apt to be led aſide by every wind of doctrine, and abridge yourſelves in that liberty where-with Chriſt hath made you free. At the ſame time, whilſt you exerciſe your right to ſearch the ſcriptures, and judge for yourſelves in religious matters, you ſhould remember that your miniſter has the ſame right, and that to retrench him in it, is as criminal in you, as it would be preſumptuous in him to dictate to you.

Inf. 3. Whatever deference and reſpect you juſtly pay to human formularies, let your chief regards be paid to the ſacred oracles of truth.

By directing this advice to you, I do not mean to depreciate theſe excellent compoſitions which contain the articles of our public faith as a church, or to leſſen your eſteem for them. Far be the thought from me, equally far the ſuſpicion from you. I only mean to ſuggeſt, that it is your duty to pay your firſt regards to the infallible oracles of truth, and never to let your eſteem for any human writings leſſen your regard for them. Be careful never to judge of the ſacred writings by any human compoſures, but to bring theſe to the teſt of ſcripture, and judge of them by it. The more carefully you ſearch

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the ſcriptures, the more knowledge will you have of their contents, and the greater reliſh for their heavenly beauties.

In this profitable and delightful ſtudy the mind will never be ſatiated. The grandeur and variety of the objects which the ſcripture exhibits, will not only furniſh the nobleſt entertainment to the mind, but give it an increaſing deſire to dig ſtill deeper in this inexhauſtible treaſure. Diligently therefore ſearch the holy ſcriptures; they have God for their author, ſalvation for their end, and truth without any error for their contents. With propriety did the ſeraphic Hervey, when ſpeaking of the Bible, exclaim; "Ineſtimable "book! it heals the maladies of life, and "ſubdues the fear of death. It ſtrikes a "lightſome viſta through the gloom of the "grave, and opens a joyful proſpect of im-"mortality in the heavens."

The thoughtleſs and inattentive may behold little excellency in the ſcriptures; but the ſpiritually enlightened, whoſe hearts are divinely touched with the truth, will exclaim in the ſame ſtrain with this author.

Inf. 4. We may hence infer how dangerous it muſt be to add unto, or take away any thing from the word of God.

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I do not mean to charge any one with this abominable error, and miſchievous practice. God only is the judge in this, as well as in every other matter. But whoever is chargeable with it, may look deliberately, and think upon what God ſays, Rev. xxii. 19. "And "if any man ſhall take away from the words "of the book of this propheſy, God ſhall "take away his part out of the book of life, "and out of the holy city, and from the "things which are written in this book."

To *take away*, is peculiar to the vicious and depraved heart of man: When the truths in God's word thwart their diſpoſitions, they immediately ſet themſelves to explain them away, that they may pacify the clamours of conſcience, and procure a kind of liberty, or rather licentiouſneſs, in their abominations. The ſame threatening ſtands in the face of ſuch as *add* unto the words of God's truth. To *add* unto God's word, is peculiar to ſuch as would make gain of godlineſs, and accordingly model religion to their own worldly intereſt. From both which may God deliver us. Amen.

A CHARGE delivered at the ORDINATION of Mr WILLIAM CAMPBELL to the Office of the Miniſtry at *Dyſart*, *February* 23. 1774. with the ADDRESS to the Congregation.

REV. DEAR SIR,

I Do not mean by this addreſs to aſſume the character of a dictator to you, but only to be your remembrancer for a few minutes; in which the ſtation aſſigned me this day by my ſuperiors, and your candour and goodneſs will, I hope, acquit me of preſumption. You will pardon me then, dear Brother, when I call your attention to the following things with the freedom that becomes a fellow-labourer in the ſame work with you, and the affection with which that connection ſhould mutually inſpire your breaſt and mine.

I. Endeavour to be much converſant with perſonal religion. This I might venture to pronounce the very foundation of the paſtoral character. For he who does not feel the energy and influence of divine truths upon his own heart, is but ill fitted to recommend and delineate theſe truths to others. In ſuch

a caſe, and under ſuch diſadvantages, the preacher can only ſpeculatively repreſent theſe truths, as the geographer by the help of his art deſcribes the ſituation and diſtances of places in a country he never viſited; but he cannot recommend them from the experience he has had of them in his own heart; and conſequently, the hearers want the beſt commentary upon religious truths, namely, the preacher's own feeling and experience of them.

It is for theſe reaſons then, dear Sir, that I earneſtly recommend perſonal religion to your ſerious attention. Your acquiſitions in this way, will give grace (I had almoſt ſaid,) will enſure ſucceſs to your miniſtrations. You will then, in ſome ſenſe, be able to adopt our Saviour's words, "We ſpeak that "we do know, and teſtify that we have "ſeen," John iii. 11. Then you will not entertain your hearers with airy ſpeculations, the mere effects of an acute genius, or a clear head, but with the ſolid ſubſtantial food of goſpel truths which have nouriſhed your own ſoul; and your hearers, will, as it were by the power of ſympathy, catch the celeſtial flame which they ſee glowing in their preacher's boſom.

Suffer me to add upon this head, as a very

very neceſſary branch of perſonal religion, that you ought to be an example to your flock. This is an apoſtolic injunction; and beſides the manifeſt utility of it, lays you under the ſtrongeſt obligations to attend to it with diligence and care. Study to realize religion in your practice, and let your people ſee that there is a reality in ſpiritual things. This beautiful aſſemblage of character will, through the divine bleſſing, be productive of happy fruits. The combined power of precept and example will not fail of its effect. And thoſe who are ſo ſtout-hearted as to be invulnerable by precept, will ſooner or later yield to the almoſt irreſiſtible power of a correſponding example. By this you will convince your hearers that you are in earneſt about religion, and that you do not preach the goſpel in virtue of your office, or becauſe you are hired for that purpoſe; but becauſe you believe the goſpel to be a real thing, and the only means of bringing men to glory, honour, and immortality.

II. Strive to have your heart deeply impreſſed with a ſenſe of the worth and value of immortal ſouls. "What is a man profit-" ed, if he gain the whole world, and loſe his " own ſoul?" This is our infallible Redeemer's account of the matter. No acquiſition however

however great and valuable, will compenſate the loſs of the ſoul. And how ſhould it be otherwiſe? for when a man loſes his ſoul, he loſes his all. All the treaſures of the univerſe, when put in competition with the ſoul, are but like the baſe alloy when put in ballance with the pure gold. Now remember, my dear brother, that theſe precious parts of the man are entruſted to your care, and therefore ought to be the objects of your peculiar concern. In proportion as your ſenſe of the worth of ſouls is great, ſo will your care of them be; and, on the other hand, by how much the leſs your ſenſe of their worth and value is, by ſo much the leſs will your concern about their intereſt and welfare be. Particularly then, Rev. Sir, would I recommend it to you to have your heart deeply marked with a ſenſe of the ineſtimable value of the ſouls entruſted to your care. Conſider, I beſeech you, that they are ſouls for whom Chriſt died; and ſurely, if he thought them worth laying down his life for, you will judge them worthy your moſt ſedulous care, and moſt anxious concern.

III. In the diſcharge of your miniſterial work, conſult carefully the different caſes of your auditors. A right diviſion of the word of truth, is a neceſſary ingredient in the clerical

rical character. He muſt indeed be an unſkilful practitioner in medicine who would adminiſter, in all diſeaſes, the ſame cure. What would alleviate or remove one diſeaſe, would feed and increaſe another. As great, as dangerous an empiric in ſpiritual matters would the preacher be, who ſhould preſcribe the ſame remedies in all ſpiritual diſeaſes. Diligently then conſider the reſpective caſes of your hearers. Carefully inveſtigate the cauſes, ſymptoms, and progreſs of the ſpiritual diſeaſes of your flock. One hearer may need conviction; apply to him the law in all its terrors, and ſanctions, that he may be warned to fly from the wrath to come. Another may need comfort; probe his wound to the bottom, and pour the medicinal balm of the goſpel into it. A third may need reproof; uſe prudence and diſcretion in adminiſtring it, leſt, by indiſcretion, its effect be fruſtrated; and then reprove, according to the apoſtolic injunction, ſharply. The argumentative way of preaching may perhaps ſuit this hearer, the declamatory that. The rouſing ſtrain is calculated, perhaps, to awaken thoſe hearers, the conſolatory theſe. In a word, ſtrive to caſt the goſpel-net on every ſide of the ſhip, and rightly to divide the word of truth, that you may be a workman

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that need not be aſhamed of his work, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Laſtly, Do not be diſcouraged with the difficulties inſeparable from the paſtoral office. Every ſituation, every office in life, is attended with certain difficulties. From this the miniſterial office, as it cannot be, ſo neither is it exempted. You will have men of different tempers and diſpoſitions to deal with: What will appeaſe the wrath of one, will kindle that of another: The ſame method of dealing with one. will be improper with another: The counſel effectual with one, will be vain with another. It will not, I hope, diſcourage you, dear Sir, if I tell you, that you muſt alſo expect to bear a ſhare of perſonal reproach. Your office in general, and the ſituation in which you ſtand in particular, neceſſarily expoſes you to it. Think not your caſe ſingular. He who now addreſſes you, and the reſt of your reverend fathers and brethren preſent, bear with you a part of this burden; a burden which becomes light, nay, a crown, when we conſider that our Lord and Saviour bore it before us; and that it is for his ſake, and in his cauſe, that we are expoſed to it. And remember, my dear brother, that the more faithful you are in the diſcharge of your duty,

ty, the more will you be expoſed to the obloquy and reproach of men. Viewed in this light, your reproach will be your honour, and your croſs your crown.

In a word, difficult as your work is, fear not, for Jeſus has ſent his Spirit to be with you always even to the end of the world; and though you are not of yourſelf ſufficient for theſe things, yet through Chriſt ſtrengthening you, you ſhall be enabled to do all things. And, to conclude in the words of the apoſtle, "Do the work of an evangeliſt, "make full proof of your miniſtry," 2 Tim. iv. 5.

ADDRESS to the CONGREGATION.

My DEAR BRETHREN,

HAVING addreſſed our dear brother, to whom the care of your ſouls is now committed, I cannot conclude the ſolemnity of this day, without allowing you a ſhare of my concern too; and in this I think I am juſtified by this conſideration, that the duties of your paſtor and yours are reciprocal, and that it is equally ſeaſonable to put you in mind of your duty to him, as to remind him of his to you.

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I. As God has been pleaſed to eſtabliſh the goſpel among you, in the perſon of one who was your free and voluntary choice, endeavour to be duly thankful to God for ſo great a bleſſing. What would not our fathers (to whom this bleſſing was denied) have given for ſuch a privilege? Value it therefore, in proportion to the price it coſt; and remember, that you cannot expreſs your gratitude to God ſo acceptably for his goodneſs in this reſpect, as by improving under the miniſtry God has given you.

II. Remember, that after God ſends the goſpel to a people, if they do not improve under it, he either blaſts the ſucceſs of it, or removes it from them altogether. The great deſign of the goſpel is to improve mens ſpiritual ſtate here, and to educate and train them up for a more perfect ſtate in the world to come. And conſequently, when God ſees a people making no improvement under his Son's goſpel, he removes their candleſtick out of its place, and ſets it up elſewhere; becauſe he will neither allow his goſpel to be deſpiſed, nor lie uſeleſs in a corner. This awful procedure he exemplified in the caſe of the Jews, who, when they refuſed the goſpel, the apoſtles were commanded to turn to the Gen-

tiles; and this will alſo be your puniſhment, if you fall into their ſin.

III. Do not teaze your miniſter, nor break your own peace, with idle diſputations about matters of a triffling nature. Inſignificant brangles have been found, by fatal experience, to be the bane of ſociety, as well as the deſtruction of a miniſter's comfort and uſefulneſs. Though I have better things to hope of this ſociety, yet as religion amongſt many of us has dwindled into diſputes about trivial matters, to the total neglect of the weightier matters of it, it cannot be unſeaſonable to hang up to your view theſe rocks on which many have fatally ſplit. If your only object in providing yourſelves with a goſpel miniſter has been the glory of God in the ſalvation of your ſouls, ſure I am, your attention will be directed to that one thing needful; and that "forgetting the things that "are behind, you will preſs forward toward "the mark, for the prize of the high calling "of God in Chriſt Jeſus." Phil, iii. 14.

Laſtly, Remember, that the goſpel will either be the ſavour of life or death to your ſouls. The goſpel is not like other medicines adminiſtered by quacks, which if, ſay they, they do no good, will do no ill: No, my brethren, it will either kill or cure: It will

will either ſecure your ſalvation, or ſeal your damnation. How awful the thought! Let it therefore animate you to lay to heart, and ſeriouſly to conſider the things that belong to your peace, leſt at laſt it be laid to your charge, that light came amongſt you, but that ye choſe darkneſs rather than light, becauſe your deeds were evil, John iii. 19. Amen.

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE XI.

The NECESSITY of CHRIST'S ASCENSION into Heaven, and BENEFITS accruing therefrom to his CHURCH.

PSALM lxviii. 18.

Thou haſt aſcended on high, thou haſt led captivity captive: Thou haſt received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious alſo, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

IT is generally agreed, that the occaſion upon which this divine hymn was compoſed, was the tranſlation of the ark of God to Jeruſalem. This joyful event is celebrated in ſeveral pſalms, of which this is one. Though this gladſome feſtival might have given riſe at firſt to the words of the text, yet that they have a much more illuſtrious object, and a direct reference to a far more important event, is abundantly evident. The apoſtle Paul gives us a commentary upon them

them in Eph. iv. 8. in which he applies them to Jeſus Chriſt. The text is then to be conſidered as expreſſive of the truth of Chriſt's aſcenſion to heaven, and its happy and bleſſed effects. According to the peculiar genius of the prophetical language, this great event, which was afterwards to take place, is ſpoke of, as if it had already happened, in the perfect tenſe, "Thou haſt aſcended on high." The words naturally divide themſelves into the two following particulars:

1. A fact is aſſerted, namely, That Chriſt is aſcended on high. The place to which Chriſt aſcended is as obvious as that from which he aſcended. He did not aſcend, (as a late faſtidious writer † ſuppoſes) to the uppermoſt part of the airy regions, which, according to him, is the reſidence of Chriſt and glorified ſaints, but to the higheſt heavens, where God's throne is erected, and where he appears in the ſplendour of his Majeſty, and the luſtre of his glory. Accordingly, the apoſtle, ſpeaking of Chriſt's aſcenſion, Eph. iv. 10. ſays, that "he aſcended up far above "all heavens;" *i. e.* above the viſible and ſtarry heavens; and the ſame ſentiment is expreſſed by the ſame apoſtle, in other words, Heb. vii. 26. "He was made higher than "the heavens." 2. The

† Mr Whiſton.

2. The glorious and beneficial effects of Chriſt's aſcenſion are here enumerated, namely, "Captivity led captive, gifts received for "men, and a reſidence procured for God "amongſt them." Theſe fruits of Chriſt's aſcenſion we will have an opportunity of explaining under a particular department of the ſubject, which ſuperſedes the neceſſity of adding any thing more upon them here.

In diſcourſing upon this ſubject, I will,

I. Evince the expediency and neceſſity of Chriſt's aſcenſion to heaven.

II. Give ſome general remarks on Chriſt's aſcenſion, and the circumſtances attending upon it.

III. Mention ſome of the advantages and effects of Chriſt's aſcenſion.

IV. Conclude with a few inferences.

I. I am to evince the expediency and neceſſity of Chriſt's aſcenſion to heaven.

The expediency of Chriſt's aſcenſion may be rationally inferred from the reality of the fact itſelf: For, had it not been neceſſary, either for the glory of God, the welfare of his diſciples, or the accompliſhment of his arduous enterprize, Chriſt would never have aſcended; for he does nothing in vain. But,

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at the ſame time, that the propriety and expediency of it may clearly appear, you will be pleaſed to attend to the following obſervations.

1. It was neceſſary that Chriſt ſhould aſcend to his Father, in order that he might prepare a place for his diſciples.

After our Lord had anounced to his diſciples the doleful tidings of his aſcenſion, he found them oppreſſed with the moſt pungent grief. To aſſuage their ſorrow, and to diſpel the gloom which hung upon their ſpirits, he tells them, John xiv. 2. that the purpoſe of his going away from them was to prepare a place for them; and that, on this account it was expedient and neceſſary. "I go to pre-"pare a place for you." When our Lord thus expreſſes himſelf, his meaning is not, that the place deſtined for the reception and accommodation of his diſciples was not prepared at all, until he returned to his Father, becauſe inſpiration itſelf pronounces the kingdom of which true Chriſtians are heirs, to be "prepared for them before the foundations "of the world." But the expreſſion may imply in it the following things:

1. That Chriſt aſcended to heaven, and prepared a place for his ſpiritual ſeed, by taking poſſeſſion of it in their name, and as their fore-

runner.

runner. This is obvious from what Paul ſays, Heb. vi. 20. "Whither the forerunner "is for us entered, even Jeſus." Chriſt by his ſacrifice and death had purchaſed a place for his children as their repreſentative, and having thereby completely fulfilled the terms upon which a grant of this glorious place and kingdom was made by the Father, he returned to heaven to take actual poſſeſſion of it in their name, and as their forerunner, and to reſerve it for them.

2. Chriſt prepared a place for his children, by opening the gates thereof for their reception. At that inauſpicious period when ſin entered into the world, the infatuated creature was expelled the terreſtrial paradiſe, as an evidence that he could not enter into the heavenly one. The violated law, and injured juſtice, united in ſhutting the gates of both againſt him. That they might be again opened, and the creature admitted to the preſence and love of God, Jeſus Chriſt kindly interpoſes, and by being made under the law, and appeaſing incenſed juſtice, he removed all obſtructions that oppoſed the ſinner's re-admiſſion into the forfeited inheritance. Having done this, it was neceſſary, for atchieving his illuſtrious enterprize, that he ſhould aſcend to heaven, in order to open its gates,

gates, and demand acceſs into its bleſſed manſions, in his and their name.

Agreeable to theſe views, in the 24th Pſalm, the inſpired author, in the true and ſublime ſpirit of heavenly eloquence, repreſents the holy angels announcing Chriſt's approach to heaven, as his heralds, and commanding the gates and everlaſting doors to lift up their heads, that the King of glory might enter into them, as the forerunner of his ſubjects. In this ſublime paſſage, there is evidently an alluſion to the triumphant entrance of a king into his chief city or palace, when his approach is announced, and the gates commanded to be opened by his heralds. In like manner, Chriſt having purchaſed the kingdom for his ſpiritual ſubjects, goes to take poſſeſſion of it, and invokes, by his angels, as his heralds, the doors and gates to open, that there might be no obſtruction left to the entrance of his ſubjects and followers. In a word, then, it was neceſſary that Chriſt ſhould aſcend to heaven, that he might prepare a place for all his followers, by taking poſſeſſion of it in their name, opening its doors, and fitting it up for their reception.

2. Chriſt aſcended to make way for the miſſion and advent of the holy Spirit.

As the great promiſe of the Old Teſtament was the coming of the Meſſias, ſo the great promiſe of the New Teſtament was the coming of the holy Ghoſt. In the order of things, the one behoved to precede the other; and, as there was no need for the Spirit during Chriſt's perſonal preſence upon earth; ſo, by the conſtitution of the goſpel, it was unalterably fixed, that the Spirit ſhould not be ſent until the Son of God had finiſhed his work upon earth, and returned to heaven. Accordingly our bleſſed Lord, John xvi. 7. ſays, "For if I go not away, the Comforter "will not come unto you." Here, the departure of Chriſt is repreſented as neceſſary to introduce the Spirit; and, at the ſame time, it is ſuggeſted, that it was impoſſible that the Spirit ſhould come, until Chriſt had left this earth. As the Spirit, therefore, could not come until Chriſt left this earth; and as the Spirit was abſolutely neceſſary to carry on the work of Chriſt in mens hearts; therefore, it was neceſſary that Chriſt ſhould aſcend, in order to pave the way for the miſſion and advent of the Spirit of truth.

3. Chriſt aſcended to intercede for his people.

Under the law, the prieſt firſt offered the ſacrifice, and then entered with its blood into the holy of holies to intercede for the peo-

ple, and bleſs them. He could not enter there until the ſacrifice was offered, becauſe the ſacrifice behoved to precede the interceſſory plea, and was the foundation of it. And the whole ſucceſs of the prieſtly interceſſion under the law, depended upon the acceptance of the ſacrifice, and the offering it exactly according to the eſtabliſhed order. An error here would have marred the acceptance of the ſacrifice, and rendered all interceſſion founded upon it fruitleſs and unſucceſsful. In like manner, under the goſpel, it was requiſite that our great High-prieſt ſhould firſt offer the ſacrifice, and then enter into the holy of holies to intercede for and bleſs his people. Accordingly, our Lord offered his ſacrifice upon the croſs; and having done this, like the typical High-prieſt under the law, he entered with his own blood into the holy of holies above, and then commenced his interceſſory work, which, as it is founded upon his ſacrifice accepted by the Father, muſt be prevalent. To ſay no more, as the high-prieſt under the law, according to the eſtabliſhed order, could not intercede until he had offered the ſacrifice, ſo neither was it fit that our New Teſtament Prieſt ſhould intercede until the foundation of it was laid in his ſacrifice. Add to this, that

as the high-prieſt under the law could intercede no where, but in the holy of holies; ſo neither was our goſpel Prieſt to intercede any where, but in the ſpiritual holy of holies, in the preſence of God. It was neceſſary, therefore, that Chriſt ſhould aſcend to his Father, that he might offer his interceſſory prayers in the place appointed for that important purpoſe.

4. Chriſt aſcended that the ſcripture prophecies and types which preſignified this grand event might be fulfilled.

The aſcenſion of Chriſt to heaven was foretold by a great variety of Old Teſtament prophecies. Suffice it at preſent only to mention two. The firſt is contained in Pſal. xlvii. 5. "God is gone up with a ſhout, the "Lord with the ſound of a trumpet." The whole Pſalm is applied by ſome Jewiſh writers to the times of the Meſſias; and this verſe in particular can by no rules of criticiſm be applied to any other. Add to this, that as this Pſalm ſeems to have been compoſed upon a ſimilar occaſion with the 68th; and as the aſcenſion mentioned in the latter is applied by the apoſtle to Chriſt; by a parity of reaſon we conclude, that the aſcenſion mentioned in the former muſt be applied to him alſo.

The

The other ſpecimen I ſhall give of theſe prophecies relative to the aſcenſion of Chriſt is our text, which, as has been already obſerved, is applied to that event by the apoſtle, Eph. iv. 8. All the parts of the Pſalm correſpond to him, and to him alone. He is the Lord that was among the angels in Sinai, from whom Moſes received the oracles of God to give to Iſrael; and who but he can be ſaid to be the God of ſalvation, the author of it to his people. But, as it was neceſſary that Chriſt ſhould aſcend to fulfil ſcripture prophecies, it was alſo requiſite for the accompliſhment of ſcripture types. The tranſlation of Enoch and Elijah, the one in the patriarchal age before the flood, and the other in the prophetical age after the flood, was deſigned by God not only as a type of the aſcenſion of Chriſt, but as a ſenſible image and viſible repreſentation of the poſſibility, as well as the reality of that event. A local or bodily tranſlation to heaven, is a fact ſo extraordinay in itſelf, and ſo incompatible with our common notion of things, that nothing but a ſenſible repreſentation of it could convince us of its poſſibility. This God condeſcended to give us in the perſons of theſe two illuſtrious worthies. Now, that theſe propheſies and theſe types might have

their

their accompliſhment, it was expedient that Chriſt ſhould aſcend to heaven. I proceed to offer,

II. Some general remarks on Chriſt's aſcenſion, and the circumſtances attendant upon it.

1. It was a local, bodily, and viſible aſcenſion in his human, though not in his divine nature.

It was not a figurative or metaphorical aſcenſion, implying his advent to a more glorious ſtate; neither was it a ſpiritual aſcenſion, becauſe in both theſe ſenſes believers may be ſaid to aſcend as well as Chriſt: but it was local, an actual tranſlation from one part to another; from the Mount of Olives to heaven. There was a peculiar propriety in the place from which he aſcended; for, as on a mount he preached, prayed, was transfigured, and crucified; ſo, at laſt, on a mount he aſcended. *Some of the ancient fathers tell us, that in their days the exact print of our Saviour's feet remained on this preciſe ſpot of the mount from which our Lord aſcended; and the ſame fact is firmly aſſerted by modern travellers, who add, that the footſteps cannot be obliterated. Whether

* See Edwards' body of divinity.

Whether this is to be treated as a legendary tale, as the ebullitions of intemperate zeal, or as a real fact, is not for me to determine. Be it true or falſe, the evidence of the fact remains the ſame.

Add to this, that it was bodily and viſible. He went up to heaven in the ſame human nature which he had on earth; with the ſame human body which was crucified; and with the ſame human ſoul which was ſeparated at his death from his body, and re-united to it after his reſurrection; and in the ſight and preſence of a great many ſpectators, who, as his aſcenſion was gradual, had both time and opportunity to behold the aſtoniſhing event with ſuch attention as leaves no room to ſuſpect a deception. The fact is recorded at full length, Acts i. 10, &c.

2. He aſcended by his own inherent power.

In this reſpect his aſcenſion differs materially from that of Enoch and Elijah, who were carried up to heaven, not by their own, but by an exertion of the power of God. That Chriſt aſcended by his own power is juſtly inferred from his divinity, and is evident from the account he gives of himſelf, John x. 17, 18. "I lay down my life, that "I might take it again: No man taketh it "from me, but I lay it down of myſelf; I

"have

" have power to lay it down, and I have " power to take it again." This life was in a peculiar ſenſe his own; he derived it from none, it was dependent upon none; therefore none could take it from him: it follows therefore, that if he laid it down, it was the effect of his own will; and if he took it up again, it was the effect of his own power. In a word, if it was his own will and good pleaſure that made him deſcend from heaven, it muſt be by his own power that he aſcended to it again. Hence our Lord ſpeaking of his aſcenſion ſays, " I aſcend to " my Father, and your Father," John xx. 17. as if he had ſaid, I by mine own power inherent in me as God, and not by that of another, aſcend to my Father, and your Father. It is true indeed, that the aſcenſion of Chriſt is aſcribed to the right hand or power of God in Acts ii. 33. But it is eaſily reconciled to the above account of the matter, by ſuppoſing that as the Father and Son are one, ſo their united power is always exerted together; and that it is the ſame thing to aſcribe Chriſt's aſcenſion to the Father as to himſelf: Or, if you pleaſe, the expreſſion may have a reference to the human nature of Chriſt; for as man God exalted him to heaven, and as God he exalted himſelf.

3. Chriſt

3. Chriſt went up with a ſhout, and attended with a grand retinue.

"God the Lord, ſays the Pſalmiſt, is gone "up with a ſhout, and with the ſound of a "trumpet." Joy rung through heaven, if I may be allowed the expreſſion. When Chriſt entered upon his mediatorial work, his birth was announced by angels, who ſang a hymn of joy and praiſe: Angels, as it is thought by ſome, appeared in a cloud at his transfiguration; two of theſe miniſtring ſpirits attended whilſt in the grave, one placed at the head, the other at the feet of his body. And after he had atchieved his arduous enterprize, and obtained a complete triumph over principalities and powers, and was about to return to his Father, and his throne, a ſplendid retinue of angels, the twenty thouſand chariots of God, were ſent to compoſe the triumphal proceſſion, and to accompany him to heaven. In this auguſt manner, and with the enſigns of peerleſs majeſty, did the Son of God, our triumphant Redeemer, aſcend into heaven. This leads me to obſerve,

4. That a welcome reception was no doubt given him upon his entrance into heaven by his Father, and all the glorified inhabitants thereof.

He was his Father's beloved Son, and lay in his boſom from eternity; and, no doubt, he would meet with a welcome reception from the Father, who was glorified in and by his work. Angels ſhouted for joy when he entered upon his work, which afforded ſuch a proſpect of glory to the Father and the Son; and, we may be ſure, they would redouble their exultations when he had compleated the work.

Was not Chriſt's entrance into heaven a ſubject too ſolemn and grave to permit the luxuriancies of fancy and imagination, here is a field through which the moſt fruitful might roam, and diſplay itſelf.—Might we not ſuppoſe that he would be welcomed back to heaven by Moſes, and the prophets, in theſe various characters under which they had repreſented him whilſt on earth. Might not Moſes, in holy exultation, thus exclaim, Welcome, welcome back to the Father's boſom, thou bleſſed Seed of the woman: Thou waſt ſent to earth to bruiſe the ſerpent's head, and thou haſt effectually accompliſhed thy difficult enterprize, by deſtroying his works, ſin and death. All hail! (might not Iſaiah the evangelic prophet ſay,) thou wonderful Counſellor, thou Prince of peace; thou haſt been giving counſel to the church viſible upon

on earth; thou haſt been proclaiming peace, and eſtabliſhing it there; and now thou art returned to heaven to conduct, by the treaſures of thy infinite wiſdom, the operations of the church inviſible in heaven. Might not Haggai join in the general joy, and welcome back to heaven him, whom he had in the ſpirit of prophecy deſcribed, as the Deſire of all nations. Zechariah uniting with him in proclaiming the approach, and celebrating the triumphant entrance into heaven of the man whoſe name is the Branch. And, to ſay no more, might not Malachi, who cloſed the prophetical age, bring up the rear, exultingly ſaying, Come, thou Sun of righteouſneſs, thou has enlightened, by thy genial warmth and rays, the lower world; we now rejoice that thou art returned hither to diffuſe thy light and heat through this world of glory. But, why ſhould we exclude the venerable Baptiſt from a ſhare in the general joy. Might not he in triumph, and in an extacy of heavenly joy, exclaim, I exhibited him to the church militant, as the Lamb of God which taketh away the ſin of the world; but now I can hold him forth to you the hoſts of heaven, as having actually taken away the ſins of the world. I proceed,

III. To

III. To mention ſome of the advantages and effects of Chriſt's aſcenſion.

To expreſs the advantages, and to enumerate the happy fruits of Chriſt's aſcenſion, would exceed the power of language; nay, ſurpaſs the utmoſt compaſs of thought. I ſhall confine myſelf at preſent to the three mentioned in the text.

1. One happy fruit of Chriſt's aſcenſion is, that Captivity is led captive.

This expreſſion is clearly explained by the apoſtle, Col. ii. 15. "And having ſpoiled "principalities and powers, he made a ſhew "of them openly, triumphing over them "in it." *i. e.* Chriſt having routed and vanquiſhed all our ſpiritual enemies, led them captive, and celebrated a public triumph over them.

Ever ſince the fall, man has been Satan's priſoner, led captive by him at his will, and the ſervant or ſlave of ſin. Before he could be emancipated from this ſlavery, and delivered from his ſtate of captivity, it was neceſſary that a victory ſhould be obtained over his enemies who had led him captive and enſlaved him. This important deciſive victory was atchieved by Jeſus Chriſt the

Lion

Lion of the tribe of Judah, the mighty One, and the Captain of our ſalvation. He by his ſacrifice and death, his reſurrection and aſcenſion to heaven, bruiſed the ſerpent's head, by deſtroying his works ſin and death; and having ſpoiled principalities and powers of their captive prey, made a ſhew of them openly, and returned in triumph to heaven, with captivity led captive; with all our ſpiritual enemies priſoners, as the trophies of the victory obtained over them.

The expreſſion in the text is evidently an alluſion to the manner of celebrating a triumph amongſt the antient nations. After a deciſive victory was obtained, a triumph was generally decreed in honour of the general; and if any perſons of diſtinction amongſt the enemy were taken priſoners, they were ignominiouſly carried in triumphal proceſſion through the ſtreets of the capital city chained to the chariot of the conqueror. In alluſion to this, Jeſus Chriſt having vanquiſhed, and taken captive all our ſpiritual foes, returns (as it were) in ſolemn triumph to heaven, with Satan and his works, ſin and death, chained to his twenty thouſand chariots.

2. Another fruit of Chriſt's aſcenſion is, Gifts are given unto men.

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The text expreſſes it in theſe terms, "Thou "has received gifts for men." Chriſt as God cannot be ſaid to have received from any theſe gifts, becauſe he poſſeſſes them all; they are inherent in him, as having all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily, and all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge hid in him: But as Mediator he received them from the Father, together with the kingdom which he had appointed him; and he received them for no other purpoſe, but to diſtribute them amongſt men, which he accordingly did immediately after his aſcenſion.

There is here likewiſe an alluſion to the triumphs amongſt the antient nations, during, or after the celebration of which, it was cuſtomary for the general to diſtribute gifts and preſents amongſt the moſt faithful of his ſoldiers, eſpecially thoſe who had ſignalized themſelves on the field. In alluſion to this, Jeſus Chriſt after his triumphant aſcenſion to heaven, diſtributed gifts and largeſſes amongſt men. Not amongſt thoſe who were faithful and loyal ſubjects, but the rebellious; thoſe who had, without provocation, renounced their allegiance to him, and unnaturally rebelled againſt him and his government. The beſtowing of gifts upon the rebellious, ſuggeſts to us a remark, which the proud

proud heart of man is very unwilling to admit; namely, that theſe gifts were altogerher the effect of grace, and the fruit of royal and undeſerved bounty.

The ſum and the ſource of theſe gifts which our Redeemer gave to men, is his holy Spirit, which he ſent immediately after his aſcenſion. By receiving the gifts of the Spirit in an extraordinary manner, the apoſtles were fitted for their extraordinary work; and ordinary Chriſtians, in all ages of the church, by receiving them in an ordinary degree, are fitted for all the parts of their work as Chriſtians, and enabled to perform the proper functions of the ſpiritual life.

3. Another fruit of Chriſt's aſcenſion is, A reſidence procured for God amongſt men.

That God might dwell with men is another and a glorious fruit of Chriſt's aſcenſion. Before the entrance of ſin, God dwelt in and with man. He was cloſely united to God, and enjoyed uninterrupted intercourſe with him. But, when ſin reared its deformed head in the ſoul, contaminating all its powers, and debaſing all its affections, it became an unfit place of reſidence for an immaculate God; and conſequently, from that inauſpicious period, God ceaſed to dwell with man, and cannot conſiſtently with his unſullied

unſullied purity re-enter the heart of man, until it is fitted up as a living temple for God to reſide in.

That the pollution of the ſoul might be removed, the unhallowed gueſts which infeſt it diſlodged, and fitted up for God to dwell in, Chriſt ſent the holy Spirit, by whoſe purifying influences and powerful energy theſe important ends are happily accompliſhed; God returns to the creature, and dwells in him, as the very ſubſtance and actuating principle of life in his ſoul. As the firſt Adam dwells with and is in the old creature, or the ſinner, by his life communicated to him in natural generation; ſo, in the ſame manner, God, or which is the ſame thing, Chriſt the ſecond Adam, dwells with and is in the new creature, by his life communicated to him in regeneration. What the life of the firſt Adam is to the one, that the life of Chriſt the ſecond Adam is to the other.

The dogmatical philoſopher, and the opinionative Deiſt, may pronounce this enthuſiaſm; but the truth, with its evidence, ſtill remains the ſame. There is no more abſurdity in ſaying, that the life of God is in the new creature, than there is in aſſerting, that the life of Adam is communicated through ſucceſſive generations to the ſinner,

or the old creature, which they do not themſelves deny. If it is enthuſiaſm to maintain the one, it muſt be ſo to aſſert the other. Theſe two truths muſt ſtand or fall together, and ſtrange it is that men ſhould admit the truth in the one caſe, and deny it in the other.

I conclude with ſome inferences from what has been ſaid.

Inf. 1. The aſcenſion of Chriſt to heaven, gives us full aſſurance of the aſcenſion of all true Chriſtians to heaven at laſt.

Chriſt's aſcenſion is an earneſt and pledge of the aſcenſion of his people at the laſt. It is for this reaſon that Chriſt ſpeaking of his aſcenſion to his diſciples, ſays, "I aſcend to "my Father and your Father, to my God and "your God." He aſcended to the Father, becauſe he was his Father; and to God, becauſe he was his God; and, for the very ſame reaſon, will all believers aſcend to their Father and their God. As their Father and their God is in heaven, it is fit and neceſſary that the children ſhould be where the Father is. As God's houſehold is in heaven, it is proper that the members of the houſehold ſhould be where the houſehold is kept. Accordingly, when Chriſt has ſerved the purpoſes of his government by his children here,

he ſends the meſſenger of death to rid them of that part of their conſtitution which is unfit for heaven; and, at the ſame time, commiſſions the angels, his miniſtring ſervants, to bring their ſouls to heaven, that where he is, there they may be alſo. And, at laſt, on the morning of a glorious reſurrection, he re-unites their ſouls and bodies, makes what is mortal about them put on immortality; what is corruptible, put on incorruption; that they may ſee him as he is, and appear with him in glory. Encouraged with ſuch a glorious thought; animated with ſuch a raviſhing proſpect, ſhould it not be our continual ſtudy ſo to run as that we may obtain the prize.

2. Since Chriſt is aſcended into heaven we ought to raiſe our affections to it. Heaven is the Chriſtian's hope and his home. His Father, his elder Brother, his brethren, his portion, his inheritance, his all is there; and there ſhould his affections centre. Strive therefore to live as having your converſation in heaven. Earthly enjoyments are periſhable and uncertain, and are therefore improper objects for the affections of an heaven-born, an immortal ſoul. "Ye are dead, "and your life is hid with Chriſt in God;"

and

therefore, ſet your affections on things above, and not on things in the earth.

Laſtly, If the death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion of Chriſt, are ſuch important truths, and big with ſuch happy effects, ſurely they ought to be commemorated with frequency, gratitude and alacrity.

" Can a woman (exclaims the prophet) " forget her ſucking child? Yea, ſhe may; " but I will not forſake or forget you." And will the Chriſtian forget to commemorate the death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion of the endeared Saviour? Unnatural indeed! For perpetuating theſe illuſtrious events, and for cheriſhing and ſtrengthening the remembrance of them in the Chriſtian's heart, was the ordinance of the ſupper inſtituted.

Come then to this ordinance, and remember with gratitude and love, a dead, a riſen, and aſcended Saviour. He remembers you, dear Chriſtians, with the tendereſt feelings of compaſſion, and the warmeſt emotions of love in heaven. Come ye, and remember him on earth, with the flame of love, the fire of gratitude, and the tears of godly ſorrow at his table. And that we may all be enabled to do this, is our earneſt prayer to the Father of ſpirits, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, Amen.

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE XII.

What is NECESSARY to render CHRIST PRECIOUS to the SOUL.

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1 PETER ii. 7.

Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious.

SUCH is the genius and conſtitution of the human mind, that we cannot love or hate, believe or diſbelieve, at pleaſure. Before the affection of love can be excited in the ſoul, the object to be beloved muſt appear lovely in our eyes; and before we can believe, (unleſs the mind is perverted or vitiated,) the facts to be believed muſt be authenticated and rendered credible to us. The ſame thing may be ſaid with reſpect to hatred and diſbelief. What is deteſtable and deformed in itſelf, almoſt irreſiſtibly excites averſion in the ingenuous mind; and theſe facts that are improbable or incredible in themſelves,

themſelves, are as naturally diſbelieved by us. It is for this reaſon that unenlightened ſinners ſee no comelineſs or beauty in Chriſt, though altogether lovely in himſelf. They are deſtitute of faith, the only proper organ by which the ſoul can view him; and as he has therefore never appeared lovely to them, they are void of any feelings of love to him. And it is on the ſame account that Chriſt is ſo exceedingly precious to and lovely in the eye of the genuine Chriſtian. He is poſſeſſed of faith, that ſpiritual faculty of the new creature which diſcovers the beauty of Chriſt; and viewing him in his true light, as altogether lovely, his love and affection naturally center upon him as the moſt precious object in his eſteem. Hence we find the apoſtle, in our text, repreſenting Chriſt as precious, or preciouſneſs itſelf, to believers; but as vilified, ſpurned at, and deſpiſed by the diſobedient, or thoſe who are deſtitute of the truly diſcerning and diſtinguiſhing faculty of faith: "Unto you therefore which believe, he is "precious: but unto them which be diſobe-"dient,--a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of "offence."

In the verſes preceding the text, the apoſtle points out the important ſtation which Chriſt occupies, by the ſimple, but ſignificant figure

of

of a corner-ſtone. As the corner-ſtone unites and compacts together the parts of a building, and gives ſtrength, firmneſs, and beauty to the whole ſuperſtructure; ſo, in the ſpiritual building of mercy erected in the goſpel, Jeſus Chriſt is the corner-ſtone, knitting and cementing together all true believers, who are the living ſtones in this ſpiritual edifice; in conſequence whereof they receive from him ſtrength and beauty, and grow unto an holy temple in the Lord. On account therefore of Chriſt's utility in this ſpiritual temple, and the eminent and diſtinguiſhed ſtation he fills in it, the apoſtle juſtly concludes, in the words of the text, that he is precious to ſuch as believe in him.

In the text you will be pleaſed to obſerve the following things:

1. The real character of Chriſt ſtated, *he is precious.* This preciouſneſs in him does not ariſe from the creature's views of him, but from the intrinſic worth and excellency of his perſon, offices, relations, inſtitution, and laws; and therefore he is and will be precious whether men eſteem him ſo or not.

2. The character of theſe to whom Chriſt alone is precious; they are *believers.* As faith is that organ which alone diſcovers the beauty of Chriſt, and that faculty which traces

and

and diſcovers the true character of Chriſt; ſo it follows, that it is to theſe only who are endued with this faculty, that he is precious or valuable. As the external ſenſes in the natural man diſcovers to him the beauty of material objects; ſo, faith acting in the ſoul in the ſame capacity that the ſenſes do in the body, diſcloſes and reveals to the ſpiritual creature the beauty and lovelineſs of Chriſt.

Let us then enquire,

I. What view of things is neceſſary to render Chriſt precious to the eſteem of the ſoul?

II. What is it in Chriſt that is precious to the true Chriſtian? Then,

III. Offer ſome inferences for improvement.

I. What view of things is neceſſary to render Chriſt precious in the eſteem of the ſoul?

1. A ſenſe of our need of him.

A ſenſe of our need of any object is abſolutely neceſſary to render it deſirable and precious in our eſteem. What we do not ſtand in need of, or what is uſeleſs to us, we are generally very indifferent about, and ſee very little worth in, unleſs the mind is diſordered and vitiated. Whereas, on the other hand,

hand, we naturally eſteem what is uſeful and neceſſary to us, and are generally impatient for the actual poſſeſſion of it. Theſe general remarks will eaſily apply to the point we are iluſtrating. As long as the infatuated ſinner remains unconvinced of his need of Chriſt, and fondly imagines that his caſe either does not require the help of Chriſt, or that he is able to furniſh himſelf with all neceſſary aid, he will have no deſire after Chriſt, and conſequently, will ſee no worth or precioufneſs in him. On the other hand, when the ſinner's eyes are opened, and he ſees the complicated wretchedneſs of his caſe, and is perſuaded of his own utter inability to extricate himſelf from it, then he diſcovers his need of the help of Chriſt, and he appears precious and valuable in his eyes, becauſe he is uſeful and neceſſary to him. Previous to Paul's converſion he ſaw not his need of Chriſt, and therefore no precioufneſs in him; but as ſoon as the grace of God reached his heart, he diſcovered his own need of him; and conſequently, him whom before Paul ſet at nought, he afterwards preached as precious and altogether lovely. Thus a ſenſe of our need of Chriſt is neceſſary to render him precious in our eſteem.

2. A conviction of his ſuitableneſs to our reſpective caſes, and of his ability to afford the relief they require.

When a perſon is grappling with any difficulty, or labouring under any ſtraits, though help be offered to him, yet if that help does not appear to him ſuitable to his caſe, or commenſurate to his emergency, it affords but little comfort. On the other hand, if a perſon offers his help, who is willing and able to give him the deſired relief, how eagerly does he graſp at that relief; how cordially does he welcome, and how highly does he value the generous hand that offers it?

This is the caſe with the ſinner; though the occaſional workings of the natural conſcience may, now and then, give him ſome faint views of his miſerable and perilous ſtate, and create in him ſome tranſient deſires for foreign help to relieve him; yet he will never earneſtly ſeek it in Chriſt, or highly value him, until he is convinced of Chriſt's ſuitableneſs to his caſe, and his ability to afford him that relief which it requires. When the terrors of the violated law have awakened the ſleeping conſcience of the ſinner, and incenſed juſtice purſued him out of all his refuges of lies, and driven him from every

ſubterfuge, then he is convinced of his imminent danger and helpleſs condition. Add to this, that when the holy Spirit, at this dreadful period, exhibits Chriſt to the ſinner, through the medium of faith, in his ability and ſuitableneſs, then he ſees his abſolute need of him, is convinced that he is ſuited to his caſe,—in his conſtitution as man to die for him, and as God to overcome death;—in his offices, as a prophet to teach him, a prieſt to atone for his ſins, and as a king to defend him, and rule over him;—in his relations, as a ſhepherd to feed and attend him; as a phyſician to heal his diſeaſes; a counſellor to direct him in difficulties; and as an advocate to plead his cauſe; and as a captain to bring him off the field of battle with the laurels of victory in his hand. The conſequence of all is, that theſe views of Chriſt render him precious in the eſteem of the ſoul.

3. It is neceſſary to render Chriſt precious to the ſoul, that we have a perſuaſion that we will be undone without him.

The gradation and proceſs here is abundantly obvious. A ſenſe of our need of Chriſt creates in the ſoul a deſire for him: A conviction of his ſuitableneſs and ability, diſpoſes us to embrace his help; and a perſua-

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ſion that we are undone without him, renders him precious in our eſteem. This view of Chriſt is peculiarly calculated to endear him to us. As that which is capable of ſaving us from ruin, and making us peculiarly happy, is dear to us, and highly valued by us; ſo, when the ſinner ſees that he muſt be eternally ruined without Chriſt, and that he alone can replace him in his forfeited happineſs, how comely, how precious, how valuable, is he in his eyes? And in proportion as this perſuaſion is deep and ſtrong in the ſinner's mind, ſo is Chriſt dear and precious to him. When Peter, in a kind of paroxyſm of zeal, attempted to walk upon the ſurface of the briny ocean, he ſtruggled hard to atchieve the hazardous enterprize; but finding all his efforts vain, and being fully convinced, that without his Lord's immediate help, he muſt ſink, he cried out, "Save Lord, or I "periſh." A kind of emblem of the ſinner's caſe. After trying every expedient to extricate himſelf from that ruin in which the fall hath involved him, but finding them all ineffectual, and being convinced that his help is lodged alone in Chriſt, he adopts Peter's language; and when he finds the help actually adminiſtered to him, how precious is the kind helper in his eyes?

This

This view of things ſeems to be neceſſary to render Chriſt precious to the ſoul.

I now proceed to ſhew,

II. What it is in Chriſt that is precious to the true Chriſtian.

1. The wonderful conſtitution of his perſon as God-man.

Faith, by tracing the character of Chriſt, and the ſinner's caſe, through the ſacred record, not only diſcovers to the Chriſtian the worth of the one, but the miſery of the other. It is by the eye of faith that he ſees both in their true and genuine light. By means of this faculty, the creature ſees that his ſins are of ſuch a deep dye, that without the ſhedding of blood there can be no remiſſion: Further, he ſees, that as the curſe has bound him over to death, that this king of terrors muſt be ſubdued ere he can be ſet at liberty, and reſtored to life. And when again he attends to the conſtitution of the Redeemer's perſon, and finds that as man he is capable of dying as an expiatory ſacrifice, and that as God he is able to ſubdue death, by raiſing up to a deathleſs life, how precious muſt Chriſt be to him in this amiable view of him? But to complete the view, when the true

Chriſtian

Chriſtian looks back by faith, and ſees that Chriſt, in virtue of the conſtitution of his perſon, has actually done theſe for him, then what words can expreſs, what fancy can conceive how precious and ineſtimable he is to the believing ſoul? The hope of benefits to be received, renders the giver amiable in our eyes; but the ſenſe of benefits already received, renders him precious in proportion to the worth of theſe benefits, and our need of them.

2. Chriſt is precious in his offices, of prophet, prieſt, and king.

The unenlightened ſinner is totally ignorant of the utility, neceſſity, and ſuitableneſs of Chriſt's offices:—Of his prophetical office, becauſe he is inſenſible of his ignorance of the ſpiritual world, and the way of entrance into it;---of his prieſtly office, becauſe as he is not convinced of the guilt of his ſins, he does not ſee the neceſſity of a propitiatory interceſſor;---and of his kingly office, becauſe he does not ſee his need of being ſubdued in his perverſe will, or of kingly help to reſtrain and conquer his enemies. On the above account the ſinner ſees no preciouſneſs in the official character of Chriſt. But it is not ſo with the believer. He has been covinced of his ignorance of his duty to God, and

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the way of acceſs to him; he has happily experienced Chriſt as a prophet, this makes the ſcales drop from off his eyes, and light divine in theſe important matters beam upon his overclouded underſtanding, and therefore he is precious to him in his prophetical character. Add to this, that he has ſeen the atrocious guilt of his ſins, and obſerved the heinous aggravations that mark them; he has felt the galling yoke of them wreathed about his neck, and groaned under the heavy load of them; and having, at the ſame time, found that Chriſt as a ſacrifice has expiated the guilt of them, and by his ſanctifying Spirit leſſened the intolerable burden of them, how precious does he appear to him in his office as a prieſt? In a word, the Chriſtian having felt his perverſe will ſubdued, and his numerous and unrelenting foes either reſtrained or conquered, by the kingly power of Chriſt, he eſteems him precious and lovely in that office too. Thus is Chriſt precious to the believer in his offices.

3. Chriſt is precious in his relations.

The ſinner is as ignorant of the endearing nature of Chriſt's relations, as he is of the ſuitableneſs of his offices; and conſequently, equally indifferent to both. As he has never ſeen the neceſſity of Chriſt's triple office, ſo he

he has never enjoyed the ſweets of theſe relations in which he ſtands to his people; and therefore, in neither of them is Chriſt precious to him. But, on the other hand, the believer has ſeen his need, and taſted the ſweetneſs of the endearing relations that ſubſiſt betwixt Chriſt and his ſpiritual ſeed; and therefore, he is not only precious to him in his relation in general, but in the various branches and modes of it.

As a *Shepherd*, he is precious to the believer, becauſe his own experience teaches him, that he in this relation carries the lambs of his flock in his boſom, and gently leads thoſe that are with young. As a *Phyſician*, he is precious to him, becauſe, convinced of the malignity of his ſpiritual diſeaſes, and of the alarming ſymptoms that accompany them, he knows that *Jehovah Rophi* can only heal them. As the wondeful *Counſellor*, he is precious to the Chriſtian, becauſe, being often in darkneſs, he has made light to ſpring up to him in the midſt of it, and has often made a crooked path ſtraight to him. As a *Friend*, he is precious to him, for he hath found him to ſtick cloſer than a brother; and that when all his friends have forſaken, God hath taken him up. As the *Captain* of his ſalvation, he is precious to him, becauſe, by his aſſiſt-

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ance and direction he hath hitherto kept the field againſt his ſpiritual foes with advantage, and truſts that through him all his enemies ſhall at laſt be ſubdued under his feet. And, to ſay no more, he is precious to him as an *Advocate*, becauſe, through his interceſſion many of his pleas with God have already been gained, and he firmly truſts, that, through his advocacy, whatſoever he aſks, it ſhall be done unto him.

4. Chriſt is precious in his ordinances and inſtitutions.

As the ſinner ſees no form or comelineſs in Chriſt himſelf, ſo he can diſcover no preciouſneſs in any thing that belongs to him.

His ordinances and inſtructions, as well as his offices and relations, ſhare the ſame undeſerved fate in the ſinner's eſteem. The reaſon is obvious, he has never reaped benefit from Chriſt's ordinances, nor taſted the felicity ariſing from intercouſe with Chriſt in them; and therefore, they are of no value or conſideration in his faſcinated eye. But the Chriſtian's perſonal experience has taught him the preciouſneſs of the ordinances of Chriſt: He knows they are the channels through which ſpiritual food and nouriſhment are communicated to his ſoul, and that they are the galleries in which Chriſt is held;

held; and therefore they are precious to him, and Chriſt himſelf precious in them. Often when he has been mourning and comfortleſs, he has been made to rejoice with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory, when he has found Chriſt in his ordinances. As his happieſt moments are theſe in which he enjoys Chriſt in ordinances, ſo his darkeſt days are thoſe when Chriſt is not to be found in them. Indeed, my brethren, the experience and example of the ſaints of God are the ſtrongeſt evidences of the precioufneſs of Chriſt's ordinances.

The heaven-born Pſalmiſt, having often felt how good it was for him, and how inexpreſſibly ſweet to draw near to God, laments, in the moſt paſſionate ſtrains, his baniſhment from the temple-ſervice, by the unnatural rebellion of his ſon; and ſo exalted was the felicity he received from communion with God in his ordinances in the temple, that he envied the little birds that were allowed to build their neſts in it unmoleſted, whilſt he was not permitted to approach its hallowed gates. So precious, in ſhort, are Chriſt's ordinances to his people, that one hour ſpent in communion with God in them, is preferred by them to a thouſand years elſewhere.

5. Chriſt is precious in his laws.

The laws of Chriſt have ever been an object of the ſinner's averſion, and will continue to be ſo whilſt he is a ſinner. Their equity and excellency he has never diſcovered, to allure him to obedience; and their ſtrictneſs has deterred him from making the attempt. They are to him, what circumciſion was to the Jews, a yoke he is unable to bear. Widely different are the Chriſtian's views and ſentiments of them. He ſees they are a tranſcript of the all-perfect nature of their divine Author, and he eſteems them, not only on account of their own intrinſic worth and equity, but on account of him who enacted them. The grace of God, and the new nature implanted in his ſoul, makes the yoke of them eaſy, and the burden of them light; and the firm perſuaſion he has, that in keeping of them there is a great reward, animates him to a ready and willing obedience. He is not dragged into, nor puſhed on to obedience, like the ſinner, through fear of puniſhment, but ſweetly conſtrained to it by a ſenſe of duty, and an inward approbation of the laws themſelves. Senſible he is, that at beſt he is but an unprofitable ſervant; but he truſts and hopes that his ſincere but imperfect obedience will be accepted in Chriſt.

Add

Add to this, that all the laws of Chriſt, without exception, are precious to the Chriſtian. Even thoſe of them at which the ſinner's whole nature faulters, ſuch as, cutting off right arms, and plucking out right eyes, are precious to the Chriſtian; becauſe he never has greater pleaſure than when he is called upon to ſacrifice an Iſaac, and is enabled by grace to do it. To ſay no more, the Chriſtian eſteems the laws of Chriſt ſo precious, that he cannot digeſt any addition to them, or alteration in them; and his heart riſes againſt any human inſtitution when put upon an equal footing with them, whether it be dignified with the faſcinating name of a Covenant, or the pompous title of a Teſtimony.

Thus is Chriſt precious to the Chriſtian in the wonderful conſtitution of his perſon, the ſuitableneſs of his offices, the endearing nature of his relations, the utility and ſweetneſs of his ordinances, and in the rectitude and equity of his laws. I come now,

III. To draw ſome inferences for improvement.

Inf. 1. From this ſubject we may learn the reaſon why ſinners diſcover no form or comelineſs in Chriſt.

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It is impoſſible to ſee any object in its true light, unleſs you view it through a proper medium. Now, as the ſinner is deſtitute of faith, he wants the proper medium through which he can diſcover the lovelineſs of Chriſt, and therefore, he ſees no precioufneſs in him. As it is the external ſenſes that point out to the man the beauty of ſome material objects, and the deformity of others; ſo, it is faith, the inward ſenſe of the ſoul, that diſcovers to the Chriſtian the beauty and precioufneſs of Chriſt: And, as without the outward ſenſes, the beauty of no material objects could be diſcerned by us; ſo without faith, it is impoſſible to ſee the lovelineſs of Chriſt. It is on account of the want of faith then, that the ſinner ſees nothing lovely or engaging in the character of Chriſt. He is deſtitute of that organ, which can diſcover his precioufneſs, and therefore, he does not diſcern any precioufneſs in the conſtitution of his perſon, the ſuitableneſs of his offices, the endearing nature of his relations, the ſweetneſs of his ordinances, and the equity of his laws.

2. The more precious Chriſt is in your eſteem, the more precious will the ordinance of his ſupper be to you.

If Chriſt himſelf is eſteemed by the Chriſtian, in equal value will every thing belonging

longing to him be held: And in proportion as he himſelf is eſteemed, ſo will his ordinances be, eſpecially that of his ſupper. Eſpecially that of his ſupper, I ſay, becauſe in it a ſymbolical repreſentation is made of Chriſt, and all the benefits of his purchaſe, and a ſenſible repreſentation of them held forth to our ſenſes. And what does and muſt render this ordinance peculiarly endearing to the Chriſtian is, that as in it he makes one of the moſt ſolemn and near approaches to God; ſo in it Chriſt is pleaſed to admit his children and people to ſolemn and near communion and intercouſe with him. To ſay no more, if Chriſt whom he has not ſeen with his bodily eyes, is precious to the Chriſtian, ſo muſt that ordinance be which holds him forth, and all the benefits he bequeaths, by ſenſible images, and as it were repreſents his precioufneſs viſibly to our eyes. And ſtrange it is, my brethren, that thoſe who wait upon Chriſt in the common ordinances of his goſpel, ſhould neglect him in this. If it is a duty to wait upon him in the ordinary, ſo muſt it be to acknowledge him in the extraordinary duties incumbent upon us. Omiſſion in the one, muſt be equally culpable as in the other. Want of ſufficient preparation is an irrelevant excuſe; be-

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cauſe the ſame excuſe will ſerve in all duties, as in one.

3. Shew that Chriſt is precious to you, by coming chearfully to his table.

The leſs that Chriſt is precious to you, the more backward will you be to come to his table. On the other hand, the more that Chriſt is precious to you, with the greater chearfulneſs and alacrity will you commemorate his death, by participating of that ordinance which he has inſtituted for that purpoſe. Say not, I am perplexed with doubts as to my title to the childrens bread; for, if you have an appetite and deſire for that bread, this is an evidence that God warrants you to ſatisfy that deſire he has given you, by eating that bread which he has provided for that very purpoſe. Complain not, Chriſtian, that you are harraſſed with temptations, and aſſaulted with the fiery darts of Satan; for who knows but that this day at his table he means to furniſh you with ſtrength to combat theſe temptations, and to repel theſe fiery darts. Plead not the want, or imperfection and lameneſs of preparation; becauſe, if this will excuſe you for neglecting one duty, it will excuſe you for neglecting all. We are never ſufficiently prepared for any duty, but this

this ſhould not make us neglect one. Come then with all your doubts and temptations to the Lord's table. Come with all your weakneſs and fears; and what ſhould encourage you to do ſo is, that perhaps this is the time when God means to diſpel your doubts, fortify you againſt temptations, ſtrengthen your weakneſs, and remove your fears. Which that he may do is our earneſt prayer to him through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

4. Shew that Chriſt is precious to you, by a conſtant regard unto his commandments.

If Chriſt is truly precious to any ſoul, that ſoul muſt love him. Now, if we love him, we muſt evidence it by keeping his commandments. This our Lord taught himſelf in words which a ſober Chriſtian can hardly imagine are capable of being miſunderſtood or perverted; "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Do we ſlight and undervalue this charge? or, Do we live impious and wicked lives? Have we no fear of God before our eyes? Do we make no conſcience in diſcharging the weighty matters of the law, the duties of juſtice and mercy to mankind? Then aſſuredly Chriſt is not precious to us. But, on the contrary, Do we, from a principle of faith and filial fear, obſerve con-

conſcientiouſly the laws of Chriſtianity? Then moſt certainly this proclaims that Chriſt is precious to us.

Laſtly, Is Chriſt precious to you? Then let all who bear the ſignatures of his image be high in your eſteem. It proceeds from wrong notions of our holy religion, or from a heart devoted to a party, to confine our love to ſuch only who are of our communion. Chriſt's rule is, Where-ever we ſee his image in a perſon, evidenced by his fruit, there let us fix our love. Amen.

Daniel Nicoll
This book is mine
March 2. 1781
Mitchell Hall

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE XIII.

The REALITY of CHRIST'S PRESENCE in ORDINANCES proved, and the EFFECTS of his GRACIOUS PRESENCE pointed out.

EXOD. xxxiii. 15.

And he ſaid unto him, If thy preſence go not with me, carry us not up hence.

THE ſentiments and diſpoſitions of men are almoſt uniformly correſpondent to their religious ſtate. It is this that forms the one, and begets the other. The man who is under the dominion of the carnal mind, is utterly incapable of reliſhing any pleaſures but ſuch as ariſe from the indulgence of thoſe paſſions that reign in his ſoul; and his ſentiments and views are all formed upon viſible objects about which he is only converſant. On the other hand, the man

who is inſpired with, and actuated by the ſpiritual mind, extracts his whole pleaſure from ſpiritual objects, and on his knowledge of this, are all his views and ſentiments founded. Indeed, the objects of their love and averſion are diametrically oppoſite to each other: What the one hates, the other loves; and what this deſires, that abhors. Hence it is that the Pſalmiſt repreſents the irregenerate ſinner (whoſe pleaſure ariſes from ſenſible objects) as continually crying, "Who "will ſhew us any good thing?" and, at the ſame time, fills the mouth of the ſaint with this language, the undiſguiſed effuſions of his heart, "Lord lift on us the light of "thy countenance." Pſal. iv. 6. It is for the very ſame reaſon, that the illuſtrious leader of the Iſraelites ſo importunately invokes the preſence of the God of the theocracy in the text. His familiar intercourſe with the divinity, had exalted his lofty mind above theſe ſordid and ſhort-lived pleaſures which ariſe from objects of ſenſe; and the comfort, joy, and happineſs, which upon former occaſions he had felt, both in his perſonal and official character, in the divine preſence, inſpired his heart with the warmeſt wiſhes and moſt ardent deſires for it, now that he was commanded to depart, he and the people whom

whom he had brought up out of the land of Egypt into the land of Canaan.

The indocile temper and ſtubborn diſpoſition of the Iſraelites had, at this time eſpecially, provoked God in ſuch a meaſure, as that he abſolutely denied them his perſonal preſence. But that they might not apprehend that he had totally withdrawn his regards from them, he promiſes them three things; the attendance of an angel; a conqueſt over their enemies; and an entrance into a land flowing with milk and honey. Theſe promiſes, however alluring in their nature, and comforting in their conſequences, could not, in the eſteem of the people, compenſate the want of the preſence of Jehovah. Accordingly, upon the annunciation of the doleful tidings, the people mourned, and no man put on him his ornaments, verſe 4.

In this emergency, the pious leader of the Iſraelites, invokes an offended God, wreſtles with him at a throne of grace, and at laſt prevails. The importunity of Moſes, turned away the divine anger, and produced the ſeaſonable and raviſhing promiſe contained in the 14th verſe, "My preſence ſhall go with "thee, and I will give thee reſt." On this felicitating occaſion, Moſes introduces the words of the text, in which he (as it were) echoes

echoes back God's words to himſelf, and turns the divine promiſe into a prayer.

In diſcourſing on this text I propoſe to ſhew,

I. The reality of the preſence of God, and intercourſe with him in ordinances.

II. What it is that mars the preſence of Chriſt in ordinances, particularly that of the ſupper.

III. The influence and effects of the divine preſence in ordinances.

I. I am to ſhew the reality of the preſence of God, and intercourſe with him in ordinances.

1. The reality of God's preſence and intercourſe with him, may be rationally inferred from the *poſſibility* of it.

The preſence of God is either eſſential or manifeſtative. The firſt ariſes from his nature and eſſence, by which he fills heaven and earth; and the other conſiſts in theſe ſpecial communications of love and grace, which the Chriſtian receives from God, together with that ſweet intercourſe, which he has with him in ordinances. By the one, he is preſent to all mankind in common; by the laſt, he is only preſent upon particular occaſions with his children and people.

That

That an interview betwixt God and gracious ſouls in ordinances is poſſible, may be maintained upon very rational principles. It is our lame and defective notions of the nature, properties, and qualities of ſpirits, that makes it difficult for us to conceive how they correſpond with each other; and becauſe we cannot explain the preciſe modus of their correſpondence, ſome are apt to doubt of its reality, nay, to queſtion it altogether. But if we underſtood the nature of ſpiritual beings, as well as we do that of material ones, we would have no more difficulty in conceiving of communion betwixt the firſt, than we have in judging of that which we daily ſee ſubſiſting betwixt the laſt.

We know very well, that God, by material objects, makes impreſſions upon the external ſenſes, by which correſpondent impreſſions are conveyed to the mind; and may not we from this rationally infer, that it is as poſſible and eaſy for God, by means of ſpiritual and inviſible objects, to convey any kind of impreſſion immediately to the ſoul. If God, by material objects, makes his power and eſſential preſence felt by mankind in general, is it not equally competent for him to let the felicity of his manifeſtative preſence be felt, through the medium of ordinances, by

by Chriſtians in particular. The one is as poſſible, and therefore, as true as the other. That the ſoul an immaterial, and the body a material ſubſtance, mutually operate upon and correſpond with each other, is a truth acknowledged by all; and where is the difficulty in ſuppoſing a poſſibility of a ſimilar correſpondence betwixt two ſpiritual beings as ſuch? True it is, we cannot expreſs the preciſe modus of this correſpondence; but neither can we explain that which takes place betwixt ſoul and body; and therefore, the one ought no more to be denied than the other. The poſſibility then of a correſpondence betwixt God and gracious ſouls in ordinances, is a ſtrong preſumption of its truth and reality.

2. The reality of Chriſt's preſence is evident from *ſcripture*.

The voice of ſcripture unites with that of reaſon, in pronouncing in favours of communion with God. It was uſual with God, during the time of the theocracy, to reveal himſelf, to thoſe whom he employed in carrying on that government, in dreams. But this was not peculiar to the theocracy. The viſion reſpecting Cornelius the Roman centurion, was communicated to the apoſtle Peter in the ſame way, as may be ſeen in Acts x.

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Theſe are inſtances of communion with God without the medium of the external ſenſes; nay, when they were altogether locked up, which afford a proof not only of the poſſibility, but the reality of that purely ſpiritual communion which ſubſiſts betwixt God and gracious ſouls in divine ordinances. But to put the matter beyond the poſſibility of a doubt, God hath, from time to time, emitted a variety of promiſes ſecuring this ennobling privilege to his people. A very remarkable promiſe of this kind is made to the Jewiſh church by God, immediately after the promulgation of the law of the ten commandments at mount Sinai, Exod. xx. 24. —" In all places where I record my name, I " will come unto thee, and I will bleſs thee." In theſe words he promiſes, not only to vouchſafe his preſence in ordinances, but to accompany it with his bleſſing. Nay, ſo true is it, that communion with God is the Chriſtian's privilege, that in Pſalm cxxxii. it is ſaid, that God hath choſen Zion, deſired it for his habitation; that it is his reſt for ever, and that there he will dwell. This promiſe was likewiſe renewed in favours of the New Teſtament church, " Wherever two or three " are met together in my name, there I will " be in the midſt of them to bleſs them."

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The goſpel promiſe of communion with God ſeems to be more unlimited and unconfined than the Old Teſtament one. This ſeems in ſome meaſure to have been reſtricted to the particular place which God himſelf choſe for his work and ſervice, and to the congregation of Iſrael when conveened in a congregational capacity; whereas, that is limited to no time place or number of people. However ſmall the number of people be, wherever the place is, whether a place dedicated ſolely to divine worſhip, or a private dwelling-houſe, or the fields, ſtill the promiſe is, " I will be in the " midſt of you."

II. What it is that mars the preſence of Chriſt in ordinances, particularly that of the ſupper.

1. The want of the wedding-garment.

It is thoſe alone who are the friends of Chriſt, and whoſe hearts are blazoned with his celeſtial ſuperſcription and image, that he admits to communion with him in ordinances. The invitation is addreſſed to friends only. " Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved," Song v. 1. His own immaculate righteouſneſs is the wedding-garment that conſtitutes a man a friend of Chriſt,

Chriſt, and makes him a welcome gueſt at Chriſt's table. Without this, a man is unfit for communion with Chriſt, and Chriſt will not admit him to the honour and felicity of it. The man, I ſaid, is incapable of it: Becauſe, whilſt he is without the wedding-garment, he is deſtitute of righteouſneſs, and conſequently under the power and pollution of ſin, and therefore as incapable of communion with God, as a dead man is of correſpondence with the living. I added, that whilſt in this ſtate Chriſt will not admit him to communion with him: For, it would be inconſiſtent with God's unſullied purity, to admit to ſpiritual intercourſe with him, a man who is a criminal and contaminated in all his faculties by the pollution of ſin.

That Chriſt will not admit to communion with him thoſe who want the wedding-garment, is evident from the parable of the king's ſon's marriage. Among the gueſts that attended that royal feſtivity, there appeared (we are told) a man who had not a wedding-garment. Upon the king's entering in to ſee the gueſts, he accoſted him in theſe awful words: "Friend, how cameſt "thou in hither, not having a wedding-gar-"ment?" Matth. xxii. 12. In the ſame manner will thoſe be treated who partake of

Chriſt's ordinances, without the wedding-garment. They may be admitted to the moſt ſacred rites of religion, but they will not be honoured with communion with Chriſt in them.

2. Neglect or want of preparation.

Preparation for the ſolemn rites of religion is expreſsly injoined by apoſtolical precepts; "But let a man examine himſelf." Without we are prepared, in ſome meaſure, according to the preparation of the ſanctuary, we are unfit for communion with God in ordinances; and, if we neglect the means of preparation, we are guilty of breaking a poſitive command of God; and therefore, he will not, on that account, admit us to fellowſhip with him.

It is very true indeed, that our preparation, however complete, cannot merit our admiſſion to communion with Chriſt; but, at the ſame time, by the divine conſtitution, there is ſuch an inſeparable connection fixed betwixt communion and preparation, that we cannot attain the one without carefully eſſaying the other. As holineſs, though it does not merit heaven, is neceſſary to prepare us for the enjoyment of God hereafter; ſo, in the ſame manner, though preparation cannot

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merit communion with God here, it is nevertheleſs neceſſary to fit us for it.

3. Want of love to our fellow communicants.

The heart muſt be right both with God and man 'ere we be fit for holy communion. If it is not right with God, we are incapable of communion with him; and if it is not right with our brother, God will not accept of our gift at his altar. Agreeable to this our Lord ſays, Matth. v. 23. 24. "If thou "bring thy gift to the altar, and there re- "membereſt that thy brother hath ought "againſt thee; leave there thy gift before "the altar, and go thy way, firſt be recon- "ciled to thy brother, and then come and "offer thy gift." If the man who is angry with his brother without a cauſe, is in danger of the judgement; and if he who ſays to his brother, Thou fool, is in danger of hell-fire, ſurely he is unfit for intercourſe with Chriſt, and therefore need not expect his preſence in ordinances. Add to this, that if want of love to our brother mars our communion with God, it will alſo intercept our ſocial fellowſhip with each other. "Can "two walk together (ſays the prophet) and "not be agreed?" ſo neither can two walk together in Chriſtian fellowſhip, while their

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hearts are ſtrangers to the kindly impulſe of love to one another. Want of love, then, to each other, deſtroys communion in every ſpecies of it. I proceed to conſider,

III. The influence and effects of the divine preſence in ordinances.

1. It animates and calls forth to vigorous exerciſe all the Chriſtian graces.

"When the king ſitteth at his table, my "ſpikenard ſendeth forth the ſmell thereof," Song i. 12. What living fire is to fewel, that the preſence of Chriſt in ordinances is to the graces planted in the Chriſtian's heart. The fewel is naturally of a combuſtible nature, yet it will not kindle into a flame until fire is applied to it; ſo the graces of the Spirit, though they are in their nature capable of exerciſe, yet they will never be called forth to it, until they feel the enlivening influence of Chriſt's preſence. As the tree, though in winter it has vegetative life in it, will never ſhoot or bloſſom till it receive the kindly rays of the ſun in the Spring; ſo the Chriſtian, though he has always grace in the habit, yet he has it only in the exerciſe, when he receives the genial warming rays of the Sun of righteouſneſs. Then, indeed, are all his gra-

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ces animated. His love, by new diſcoveries of God's love; his faith, by being ſtrengthened and recruited; his hope, by being confirmed; his heavenly mindedneſs, by ſeeing the vanity of created enjoyments; and his humility, by viewing the glory of Chriſt when on the mount with him.

2. It aſſimilates the ſoul to God.

Man was at firſt created after the divine image. His heavenly features blazoned every faculty of his ſoul. The familiar intercourſe which he had with God in the halcyon days of innocence, maintained that image undiminiſhed in its luſtre, and unſullied in its beauty, on all the faculties of his ſoul. As ſoon as ſin entered, that nearneſs to God which before the creature enjoyed, was no more; in conſequence of which, he loſt his likeneſs to God, and the features of his glorious image were obliterated in his heart. One great object of the goſpel is to reſtore that loſt image to the ſoul, and to reinſtamp its features in the human heart. This is at firſt effected by the ſinner's juſtification, in which his guilt is removed; and in his ſanctification, when he is adorned with the graces of the Spirit. In a word, as the image of God is reſtored to the ſoul, by its being again brought nigh to God; ſo that image

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is maintained, and its features brightened gradually into perfection, by means of that intercourſe which the Chriſtian enjoys with God in ordinances. In common life, we are apt to acquire a ſimilarity of ſentiment, temper, and diſpoſition to thoſe with whom we are moſt familiarly converſant. It is ſo in the ſpiritual life. The Chriſtian, in virtue of his nearneſs to God, and intercourſe with him, is aſſimilated and made like to him. And his likeneſs to God is juſt in proportion to that degree of communion to which he is admitted. The more intimate his communion with God is, the more frequent its acts are, ſo much the more is he like God, the perfection of beauty. In a word, as it was intercourſe with God in the ſtate of innocence, that aſſimilated Adam to God; ſo, in the ſtate of grace, it is fellowſhip with him that produces the ſame effect upon the true Chriſtian.

q. 3. It liberally ſupplies all the neceſſities of the ſoul.

When Chriſt's preſence is enjoyed in ordinances, all the wants and neceſſities of his people are ſupplied. It muſt be ſo, becauſe the fullneſs of Chriſt is exactly commenſurate to the wants of his people; and his preſence in ordinances is nothing elſe but the

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diſcharge of that fulneſs into the ſouls of his indigent, neceſſitous dependents. Hence it is, that in virtue of intercourſe with Chriſt in ordinances, the hungry ſoul is fed, the thirſty refreſhed, the weary relieved, and the weak ſtrengthened. The ſoul bewildered in the dark, ſhall find light to ariſe to it; the Chriſtian buffetted with temptations, ſhall find ſtrength and ſuccour; thoſe who are bowed down, ſhall be ſupported and raiſed up with a word of heavenly conſolation; thoſe who are complaining of hardneſs of heart, ſhall find their hearts melted down and ſoftened by the kindly warmth of the Sun of righteouſneſs; and thoſe who are galled with doubts, and oppreſſed with fears, ſhall find them all ſcattered and diſpelled, as the fogs in the night are by the return of the next morning's ſun. This is the Chriſtian's jubilee. Theſe are the happy moments when he rejoices with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory. When in the happy moments of communion, the Chriſtian feels the beams of divine light and love reflected upon his ſoul, he treads the earth under his feet, with a noble contempt; ſoars far above periſhable enjoyments; and, with an ennobling elevation of ſpirit, lives in this world as if he was not in it.

4. It makes the ſaints ſhout aloud for joy.

That this is an effect of communion with God in ordinances, is evident from Pſal. cxxxii. 16. "Her ſaints ſhall ſhout aloud for "joy." The Chriſtian's joy has for its ſource the everlaſting covenant. Though the ground of it can never be taken away, yet the conſciouſneſs, or ſenſe of it, may be, and is ſometimes with-held: Then a cloud intercepts his comfort. But at other times, when Chriſt's preſence is felt in ordinances, his ſunſhine returns, and light, love, and joy, ſweetly glide through his enraptured ſoul. This is eſpecially the caſe with him when the divine promiſes are accompliſhed. A chain of theſe are to be found in the forecited pſalm. There God promiſes to clothe his prieſts with ſalvation, to make David's crown flouriſh, to enlarge his kingdom, and to bleſs the proviſion of his ſanctuary. Now, when the Chriſtian feels the veracity of God proved in the accompliſhment of theſe promiſes, he is made to ſhout aloud for joy. When our utmoſt wiſhes are gratified, then there is joy in our hearts; ſo is it with the Chriſtian, when the covenant-promiſes, the ſource of his joy, are fulfilled in him.

5. It excites and promotes humility.

Jeſus is meek and lowly in heart; and when

when he gives his gracious preſence to a ſoul it produces this effect; the ſame mind comes to be in that ſoul which was alſo in Chriſt: So it was with Job, and Iſaiah, and all the tribes of worthies of whom we read in the ſacred records; when God manifeſted himſelf to them graciouſly, they abhored themſelves in duſt and aſhes.

6. It diſengages the heart from the world, and ſets the affections on things above.

The littleneſs and vanity of time's things, on the one hand, and the magnitude and importance of heavenly and divine objects, never appear in a more affecting view, than when a perſon is admitted into the gracious preſence of God. But I muſt draw to a concluſion, by adducing a few inferences.

Inf. 1. By the premiſes laid down, we may diſcover the reaſon why unregenerate ſinners deſire not the preſence of Chriſt in ordinances.

They have never ſeen their need of it, nor taſted the extatic joys which it communicates. As we have in common life no deſires for what we do not ſtand in need of, or for that which is not neceſſary to us; ſo is it in the ſpiritual life with the poor ill-fated ſinner. He is ſatisfied with created en-

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joyments; he is contented with the illuſory pleaſures which they afford; his air-born hopes of happineſs are founded on them, and therefore he has no deſires for nearneſs to and intercourſe with God, which alone can ſecure happineſs to him. Inſenſible of the ſweetneſs of the bread of life, he ſatisfies himſelf with the meat that periſheth: Incapable of reliſhing the fleſh and blood of the Son of God, he is content to eat huſks with the ſwine, and to lick duſt with the ſerpent.

2. Hence we may alſo learn, the reaſon why Chriſtians ſo earneſtly deſire Chriſt's preſence in ordinances.

The true Chriſtian, having taſted the felicity ariſing from intercourſe with God, earneſtly longs for its continuance, and ardently breathes for its renewal. Nothing ſhort of the divine preſence, will ſatisfy his enlarged heart. This was exactly the caſe with the Iſraelites. Though God had promiſed, that he would ſend a guardian angel to accompany them; that their enemies ſhould fall before them; and that they ſhould be ſafely conducted into the promiſed land, yet all theſe promiſes could not ſatisfy them without the preſence of God himſelf. What was the cauſe of this? Why, they had often been protected and gladdened in heart by the di-

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vine preſence, and therefore, the preſence of an angel, victory over their enemies, and the poſſeſſion of the promiſed land, were to them as nothing, when put in balance with the preſence of God. So true is it, that nothing but a God in Chriſt can ſatisfy the heaven-born heart of the Chriſtian. Without God all is emptineſs to him, with God all is fulneſs.

3. Earneſtly ſeek for the preſence of our covenant God in our preſent ſolemnity.

God is often rendered propitious, and heaven as it were taken by violence, through prayer; Jacob's wreſtling procured him the bleſſing. The ſucceſs of importunate prayer is likewiſe exemplified by the tranſaction recorded in the chapter of which our text is a part. The God of the theocracy, provoked by the ſtubbornneſs and ingratitude of his people, poſitively declares that he would not accompany them. What was to be done in this caſe? Muſt old Iſrael want his God? Yes, he muſt, for God refuſes to go with him. Under the dread of this, the people mourn, and no man puts on his ornaments. A gloomy day in Iſrael, indeed! Well, what does their leader do? does he ſit down unhinged by deſpair, and mourn with them? No! Faith, my brethren, when the ſhip of

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the ſoul is ready to ſink, ſtill as it were keeps its head above water. He flies to a throne of grace; wreſtles with God; pleads importunately with him; takes heaven by ſtorm; and propitiates an incenſed God, "If thy "preſence go not with us, carry us not up "hence."

To conclude, the caſe and ſucceſs of the Syrophenician woman ſhould animate you to be importunate with God for his preſence at this time. She accoſted our Lord, beſeeching him to diſpoſſeſs her daughter. She was anſwered not a word. The diſciples fired with her importunity, entreated their maſter to diſmiſs her. Hopeleſs caſe indeed! when the Maſter refuſes an anſwer, and the diſciples combine againſt her. What does ſhe do? Deſpairing of ſucceſs, does ſhe deſiſt from her ſuit? No, ſhe renews her requeſt, *Lord, help me.* She now obtains an anſwer, but little more to her comfort than our Lord's former ſilence; "It is not meet, ſays he, to "take the childrens bread, and give it to "dogs." Now ſhe meets with a third repulſe; but ſtill determined to perſevere, ſhe replies, "Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of "the crumbs which fall from their maſter's "table." She would rather have a crumb than want all; and by her importunity ſhe

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at laſt prevailed. " Then Jeſus ſaid unto her, " O woman, great is thy faith: Be it unto " thee as thou wilt." Go, my brethren, and do ſo likewiſe. And that God may this day ſay to you as he did to the Iſraelites, " My " preſence ſhall go with you, and I will give " you reſt," is our earneſt prayer.

4. Hence we may learn what is the conſequence of deſiring God's preſence, and of not deſiring the ſame.

Regenerate ſouls deſire God may go with them; the conſequence of this is *Life*. The unregenerate deſire no ſuch thing; the conſequence is *Death*. Here then is ſet before us life and death, If God is graciouſly with us, then life is ours: But if God is not graciouſly with us, then are we unhappy. Well then may we ſay, as Moſes doth in the text, " If thy preſence go not with us, carry us " not up hence." Amen.

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE XIV.

All ſuitable PROVISION in CHRIST for the SOULS of MEN.

SONG V. 1.

Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

AS the great and primary object of the goſpel is the ſalvation of ſinners, ſo all indiſcriminately are invited to ſhare of its benefits, and to ſhelter themſelves under its hoſpitable wings. In this reſpect the goſpel materially differs from one of its poſitive inſtitutions, namely, the Lord's ſupper: Whilſt the firſt invokes all mankind in general to accept of that ſalvation which it reveals; the ſecond reſtricts its invitations to the real Chriſtian; and the acceptation of the calls of the one, prepares us for the participation of the other. The reaſon of this is abundantly obvious: The goſpel conſiders all mankind as legally and ſpiritually dead; its great de-

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ſign is to quicken them, and raiſe them to a new and divine life, and therefore its addreſs is, "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice "is to the ſons of men," Prov. viii. 4. The Lord's ſupper, on the other hand, is a feaſt prepared for the maintenance and ſupport of the ſpiritual life infuſed into the ſoul of the new creature, and therefore to him it is only addreſſed. Add to this, that as in this ordinance the Chriſtian makes a near approach to God, and is admitted to ſpiritual intercourſe with him, it follows, that the ſinner, becauſe he is dead in law, is legally incapacitated for this approach to God; and, as he is ſpiritually dead at the ſame time, he is actually unfitted for that intercourſe with him of which this ordinance is the medium. Viewed as legally dead, he is incapable of correſpondence with God in point of ſtate; and conſidered as ſpiritually dead, he is unfit for it, in point of habit. Hence it is, that the invitation contained in our text, to eat and drink, is reſtricted to friends, or thoſe who of ſlaves had been made ſons, and who of ſervants had been made friends.

This holy book is, with propriety, conſidered as a kind of colloquial diſcourſe betwixt Chriſt and the church; the one in the character of the bridegroom, the other in

that

that of the ſpouſe. In the laſt verſe of the preceding chapter, the ſpouſe invokes Chriſt to diffuſe his influences throughout her ſoul, that her languiſhing graces might be quickened, and the devout flame of love to him fanned in her heart. The aſſemblage of metaphors here employed is exceedingly ſimple, but truly pictureſque. The garden is her heart, the ſpices are her graces, and the North and South winds, are the gales of the Spirit, which cultivate and fructify them.

The text contains Chriſt's anſwer to the prayer of the ſpouſe, in which he informs her that he had as it were anticipated her, and was already come into his garden, and had gathered his myrrh with his ſpice, &c. The repaſt being thus prepared, he, in the moſt endearing and tender manner, invites all his friends to eat and to drink abundantly.

Obſ. 1. An invitation given to *eat* and *drink.* To eat for our nouriſhment, and to drink for our refreſhment. The meat and drink of which the friends of Chriſt are here invited to partake, point out very naturally the fulneſs and completeneſs of the proviſion. The ſoul conſidered as informed with a ſpiritual life, requires both the ſpecies of food; bread for its nouriſhment, drink for its refreſhment. Juſt as in the animal life, food is neceſſary

for

for the immediate ſupport of it, and drink to ſupply the body with juices for digeſting the food.

Obſ. 2. The objects of the invitation, namely *friends*. The reaſon why the invitation is given to partake of this heavenly banquet we have already aſſigned. True it is, that thoſe who are invited were enemies, when under the influence of the carnal mind; but now being actuated by the ſpiritual mind, they have life as well as peace, and therefore need the food provided for the ſupport of their life, and accordingly are invited to it.

Obſ. 3. The fervour and earneſtneſs of the invitation intimated by the interjection *O!* This emphatic phraſeology ſtrongly indicates Chriſt's earneſtneſs for the ſucceſs of the invitation. O my ſpouſe, my other ſelf, my friends, my beloved; I laid down my life, I ſhed my blood to prepare this feaſt for you. I call upon you therefore, by the love you bear to me; I invoke you by that love which I have for you, to come and eat and drink abundantly. The two epithets by which Chriſt here characterizes the objects of his invitation are extremely ſignificant, "*Friends*, " and his *beloved*." The firſt points out their love to Chriſt, and the ſecond his love to them. This naturally ſuggeſts the real cha-

racter of a true Chriſtian; he is one who loves Chriſt, and one whom Chriſt loves.

Juſtly then may we ſay, "A true Chriſtian "is the nobleſt work of God."

In farther diſcourſing from this text, I ſhall,

I. Give you ſome general remarks on the invitation.

II. Shew the abundance and plenitude of this proviſion. Then,

III. Offer ſome inferences for improvement.

I. Give ſome general remarks on the invitation.

1. The invitation implies that proviſion is already laid in.

If a man in ſocial life ſhould invite his friends to a feaſt, and at the ſame time provide nothing for their entertainment, his invitation would be only tantalizing, and his unhoſpitable roof would be only an affront to his gueſts. This is not the caſe with Jeſus Chriſt. In the parable of the king's ſon's marriage, Chriſt is repreſented as commiſſioning his ſervants, not only to invite the gueſts to attend the celebration of the nuptials, but previouſly to inform them that the entertainment

entertainment was already provided, and every thing prepared for their reception, Matth. xxii. 4. The ſame method does he follow in the text. Before he tenders the invitation to his friends, he informs the ſpouſe that he had gathered his myrrh with his ſpice. Here you will be pleaſed to obſerve two things, which ſtrongly mark Chriſt's love and concern for his church; he not only tells her, that the feaſt was provided, that ſhe might have no ſuſpicions of an empty table; but he particularly informs her of the kind and quality of the proviſion, that ſhe might ſee that he exactly ſuited her caſe in quantity as well as in quality,

2. The invitation implies ſincerity in the inviter.

It has been already obſerved, that unleſs food is provided, the invitation to eat and drink would be merely tantalizing the gueſts: We may now add, that unleſs the inviter was ſincere, it would be altogether complimentary. In civil life an invitation to a feaſt would be mere outward compliment, or a ſpecious ſhew of friendſhip without reality, unleſs the inviter was ſincere in giving the invitation. We muſt therefore ſuppoſe, that Chriſt, in publiſhing the invitation contained in the text, is ſincere, and wills and wiſhes

that

that all the gueſts bidden ſhould not only comply with the invitation, but likewiſe eat and drink abundantly. Sincere, did I ſay? nay, he is not only ſincere, but earneſt and fervent. To call upon your attention, to touch the tender and ſoft feelings of your hearts, he accoſts them by the moſt endearing epithets, *my friends, my beloved.* In this invitation, the Redeemer's heart beats high, his lips diſtil, and his words glow with love. He reminds them of their friendſhip to him, and ſolemnly obteſts them to teſtify it by complying with his invitation; and he calls up to their remembrance his love to them, to excite them to eat and drink of what his love had provided for them. My friends, (ſays Chriſt,) ye were once enemies, but now your enmity againſt me is ſlain: let the impulſe of your love then induce you to come and eat of that food which I have provided for you. My beloved, in whom my ſoul delights, I invite you to appoach to this feaſt, which was provided for you by my groans and wounds, and blood, and death, and is now ſerved up to you by my love.

3. The invitation implies an appetite in thoſe that are invited.

The animal life, we know, is ſupported by food ſuited in its quality and ſpecies to the nature

nature of that life. Without an appetite the man is not diſpoſed to make uſe of this food. The ſame obſervation is equally applicable to the ſpiritual life in the ſoul of the man in Chriſt. As this life is ſpiritual in its nature, ſo it can only be reared and ſupported by ſpiritual food; and without an appetite for this food, the ſoul will have no inclination or reliſh for it: Hence the neceſſity of a ſpiritual appetite to capacitate us for eating and drinking abundantly. That the ſoul, or the new creature, is capable of appetite, is as obvious as that the body, or the old creature, is; and it is evident likewiſe, from this additional circumſtance, that proviſion would never have been furniſhed for it, unleſs it had ſtood in need of it, or been capable of uſing it. And we may add to this, that the ſpiritual appetite, in the new creature, is either weak or keen, in proportion to the ſtrength or weakneſs of the remains of ſin in him, or the influence of the divine power or preſence upon him. This ſuggeſts,

4. The invitation implies an actual receiving this food.

Though food be provided for us, though an invitation be given to eat of it, and though we have an appetite for it; yet if we do not actually receive it, and make uſe of it, we will

will never be nouriſhed and fed thereby. This obſervation is the ſame, whether we apply it to the ſoul or the body: For as the laſt cannot be ſupported without the actual uſe of animal food, ſo no more can the firſt without the actual enjoyment of ſpiritual food. Hence it is, that our Lord repreſents his fleſh as meat, and his blood as drink indeed; and it is for the ſame reaſon, that the participation of the Lord's ſupper is called feeding upon the Lord's body.

Upon the whole then, it is evident, I preſume, that the invitation implies, that proviſion is laid up in Chriſt, elſe it would be merely tantalizing us;--ſincerity in the invitation, elſe it would be only complimentary;--appetite in the gueſts, elſe they would have no inclination to eat of it;---and an actual receiving of it on our part, otherwiſe we never would be nouriſhed by it.

I proceed to ſhew,

II. The abundance and plenitude of the proviſion.

1. It is ſuited to the wants and exigencies of all its objects.

If we conſider the goſpel as addreſſed to men in the character of ſinners, we will find that

that the fulneſs with which it teems, is exactly commenſurate to the wants of its countleſs objects. Has ſin benighted them with ſpiritual darkneſs? The effulgent light of the goſpel, when injected into the mind by the Spirit of truth, diſpels that cloud. Are they dead, under the law of ſin and death? The law of the ſpirit of life under which the goſpel brings them, raiſes them to a new and ſpiritual life. Are they contaminated with the pollution of ſin, and enchained with its fetters? The fountain of living waters opened in the goſpel, cleanſes from the one; and the ſpirit of liberty which it imparts, emancipates them from the other. In a word, has the cold hand of the ſpirit of bondage chilled your hearts, and frozen up your affections? The kindly ſpirit of adoption which the goſpel engenders, warms your cold, thaws your icy, and mollifies your hard hearts.

On the other hand, if we conſider the ordinance of the ſupper, as having for its objects true Chriſtians, who have paſſed from death unto life; then we will find that the fulneſs with which it abounds is fully adequate to all their wants.

Are they complaining of ſpiritual weakneſs? here is a cordial to ſtrengthen their feeble knees, and to recruit their languiſhing ſpi-

rits,

rits. Are they harraſſed with galling temptations? Here is ſuccour for them; ſheltered under the covert of this ordinance, they ſhall be able to expel Satan's fiery darts. Are they diſtreſſed with doubts, and diſturbed with fears? The light which this ordinance conveys will ſcatter the firſt, and the courage which it inſpires will fortify againſt the laſt. Are they complaining of the feebleneſs of their faith, the languor of their affections, and the wavering of their hope? This ordinance is calculated to enliven and invigorate theſe graces, and to call them up to lively exerciſe.

In a word, whatever are the complaints and the wants of the Chriſtian this ordinance is ſufficient to remove the one, and ſupply the other.

2. The plenitude and abundance of the proviſion here laid in, is pointed out to us by the metaphors which the text employs,--*honey*,--*wine*,--*milk*.

The eaſtern languages abound in metaphors, whoſe ſimplicity and force we cannot fully underſtand, unleſs we had the fulleſt knowledge both of theſe tongues themſelves, and of the cuſtoms peculiar to thoſe who uſe them. It is common in the New, but eſpecially in the Old Teſtament, to employ metaphors

taphors borrowed from natural objects, to repreſent the nature and richneſs of theſe ſpiritual bleſſings with which the goſpel abounds. Hence we find the holy Ghoſt, in the text, uſing the ſimple but ſignificant figures of honey, wine, and milk, to repreſent the abundance of that proviſion which is treaſured up in the goſpel, and its ordinances, for the true Chriſtian. Theſe metaphors not only repreſent the plenitude, but alſo expreſs the different qualities of this proviſion:--As honey is ſweet to the natural taſte, and medicinal in its quality; ſo are the bleſſings of the goſpel, and the proviſion of the ſanctuary to the true Chriſtian. The experience of the people of God is a proof of this, Pſal. cxix. 103. "How ſweet are thy words to my taſte? Yea, ſweeter than honey to my mouth." As wine is of a chearing, healing, and reſtoring nature to the body, ſo are the bleſſings of the goſpel, and the fulneſs of its ordinances to the ſoul of the new creature. They chear the drooping ſpirits of the Chriſtian; they are balm to his wounds, and they operate as a reſtorative to his ſpiritual conſtitution. To ſay no more, as milk is of a nutritious quality, and the proper ſuſtenance of infants, whoſe feeble ſtomachs cannot di-

geſt ſtronger food, ſo it is employed to point out the ſuitableneſs of the proviſion in the goſpel to the Chriſtian's ſtate of ſpiritual infancy in the kingdom of grace. In alluſion to this, the apoſtle ſays, 1 Cor. iii. 2. "I "have fed you with milk, and not with "meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear "it, neither yet now are ye able."

3. This proviſion in all its plenitude and abundance is to be received by us, and bought without money, and without price. Iſaiah lv. 1. "Ho, every one that thirſteth, "come ye to the waters; and he that hath "no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea, "come buy wine and milk without money, "and without price."

According to the peculiar genius and conſtitution of the goſpel, the bleſſings which it contains, are communicated to their objects in a way diametrically oppoſite to that of the law. In this the diſparity betwixt the legal and goſpel diſpenſations is peculiarly ſtriking. The law was to impart its life and bleſſings through the channel of perſonal obedience; the goſpel, on the other hand, conveys its life and bleſſings as a free gift to us through the medium of Chriſt's ſacrifice and death.

This conſtitution of the goſpel, which wears the ſtrongeſt ſignatures of the manifold wiſdom of God, is peculiarly calculated to humble the innate pride of the human heart; to bring us in mind of the firſt forfeiture; to teach us that we cannot procure life by any acquiſition of our own; and, in a word, to warn us, that if we will not receive life, and its concomitant bleſſings, as the gift of God, we muſt periſh in our ſins. This is our awful but only alternative. This view of things, whilſt it ſhould make our hearts glow with love to the bountiful Giver, ſhould, at the ſame time, invite us to accept of the gift with gratitude and alacrity. I come now,

III. To offer ſome inferences for improvement.

Inf. 1. See the high honour conferred upon the diſciples of Chriſt.

They are his friends. "Henceforth," ſays our Lord to his apoſtles, "I call you no "more ſervants, but friends." To be a ſervant in the houſehold of Chriſt, is an honour which rebels could never expect; but to be advanced to the ſtation of friends, is an honour which even their moſt ſanguine hopes

hopes could never entertain and never ſuggeſt. But, my brethren, believe it with gratitude, and hear it with joy, every one of you, even the weakeſt, are treated as friends at Chriſt's table. The Maſter of this feaſt does not carry towards you with the diſtant reſerve of a maſter; but he treats you with cordial familiarity as a friend. He admits you to his table here; he delights you with the honey-comb of his ordinances; he chears you with the wine of his promiſes, and he nouriſhes you with the ſincere milk of his word, that ye may grow thereby. And though this table will ſoon be drawn, yet during your pilgrimage here, he will repeat his refreſhing cordials to revive your drooping ſpirits, to laſh your lingering moments into ſpeed, to make you mount up as on eagle's wings towards heaven, where you ſhall ſit down at a table never to be drawn: Then ſhall you, with angelic accents, and with ſhouts of applauſe welcome the happy day, ſaying,

Come the dear day, the glorious hour,
That brings our ſouls to reſt:
Then we ſhall need theſe types no more,
But dwell at th' heavenly feaſt.

Inf. 2. The friends of Chriſt are only admiſſible to this ordinance.

Enemies to Chriſt are legally incapacitated for

for this ordinance, and therefore, Chriſt will not admit them to the honour and happineſs of correſponding with him; as ſinners they are unfit for it in point of ſtate, and therefore, they cannot hold communion with Chriſt. Keep then, ye enemies of Chriſt, at an awful diſtance from his hallowed board. Come not near this awful place: "This is "none elſe but the houſe of God, and the "gate of heaven." But, at the ſame time, the friends of Jeſus are cordially welcomed. Say not, I am afraid I am not numbered amongſt the friends. I feel my heart ſo hard, my affections ſo wavering, and my love ſo cold, that with trembling ſteps I approach that hallowed board. Well, Chriſtian, the pain and uneaſineſs which this gives you, is an evidence that ye have either ſome love to Chriſt, or that you deſire to love him; and be encouraged to believe, that "the bruiſed "reed he will not break; the ſmoaking flax "which is in you he will never quench, un-"till he bring forth judgement unto victo-"ry," Iſa. xlii. 3.

Laſtly, Study to receive this proviſion as the fruit of grace in Chriſt Jeſus.

The corrupt heart naturally deſires to receive it as the reward of its own merit. The ſinner ſcorns to be ſo much obliged to God, and

and give nothing as an equivalent. "I am "not as that man," ſays the ſtrict phariſaical hypocrite. "I am no extortioner. "I faſt. I pray. I give of my ſubſtance to "the poor." What, muſt all theſe go for nothing? Yes, they muſt when weighed in God's balance. But, ſure I am, if your hearts are duly humbled with a ſenſe of ſin, and you own demerit, you will not only chearfully acquieſce in the way in which God confers the bleſſings of the goſpel, but receive them with the moſt fervent love, the warmeſt gratitude, and the higheſt praiſes of divine grace. Then ſhall your language be:

Great All in all, eternal King,
Let me but view thy lovely face,
And all my pow'rs ſhall bow, and ſing
Thine endleſs grandeur, and thy grace.

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE XV.

CHRIST the LAMB ſlain for the SALVATION of SINNERS.

REV. xiii. 8.

——The Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world.

THE human mind, in a ſtate of integrity, has a natural propenſity to embrace and cheriſh the truth; and whenever it is vitiated, its bias muſt, of conſequence, be in a contrary direction. This affords a clear proof, that there is not a ſtronger evidence of the corruption and degeneracy of the mind, than the rapid ſucceſs which almoſt every ſpecies of falſe religion has met with in the world, and the faſt hold which it has taken of the heart of man. Of all the ſyſtems of falſe religion that ever infeſted this earth, that of the Romiſh church has been the moſt remarkable for its ſucceſs, and the palpable abſurdities interſperſed throughout her enormous

mous and unweildy creed. No ſooner did the Beaſt appear, and rear his deformed head in this world, than the whole earth worſhipped him, except the ſelect number whoſe names are written in the Lamb's book of life. In the beginning of the chapter, the exiled apoſtle, under the influence of inſpiration, deſcribes the miſcreated figure of the Beaſt, and foretells the rapid ſucceſs which he has had in deluding the world. So extreme was the infatuation of men, that the whole earth fell down and worſhipped the Romiſh Beaſt, except thoſe whoſe names were regiſtered in the Lamb's book of life. It was the regiſtration of their names in this book, that preſerved them from this univerſal infection; otherwiſe they would have followed the multitude to do evil. "And all that dwell upon "the earth ſhall worſhip him, whoſe names "are not written in the book of life of the "Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the "world." In which words we obſerve,

1. The character of Chriſt under the idea of a lamb.—What is implied in this view of Chriſt's character, we will have an opportunity of ſhewing in the ſequel of the diſcourſe.

2. The death and ſlaying of this Lamb.—The ends of his death, and the purpoſes for which he was ſlain, will afterwards be enquired into.

3. The

3. The date of his death,--"Slain from the "foundation of the world." This will likewiſe fall under our diſcuſſion afterwards.

Firſt, Let us conſider the character of Chriſt under the idea of a *Lamb*.

Various are the names given to Jeſus Chriſt in the ſacred records. There muſt be a meaning and propriety in each of them, becauſe infinite wiſdom has beſtowed them. To ſuppoſe that the holy Ghoſt would give Chriſt names at random, would be blaſphemy itſelf. They muſt all therefore be ſuppoſed explanatory of ſome branch either of his natural character as God, or of his official character as God-man Mediator. The natural qualities of the Lamb, its innocence, harmleſſneſs, uſefulneſs, all perfectly agree to the character of him "who was holy, harmleſs, undefiled, "ſeparate from ſinners," Heb. vii. 26. But however obvious and ſtriking, in theſe circumſtances, this affinity may be betwixt the qualities of the lamb, and the character of Chriſt, yet I humbly apprehend that the holy Ghoſt has ſtill a higher view in giving him this epithet. You all know that the Jewiſh paſſover was typical of the ſacrament of our Lord's ſupper; and that the ſacrifice then to be made was a lamb. This was the animal choſen and ordered by God himſelf, and to

have offered any other, would have been a breach of a poſitive law, and conſequently defeated the purpoſe of the feaſt altogether. Now, as Chriſt is our goſpel paſſover, he is therefore with propriety ſtiled a Lamb.

In order to point out the propriety of that name, it is only neceſſary further to ſelect a few of the many circumſtances in which there is an evident parallel betwixt the paſchal lamb ſlain at the Jewiſh paſſover, and Chriſt the Lamb of God ſlain as our paſſover, and eaten in the ordinance of the Lord's ſupper.

1. The paſchal lamb was to be without ſpot or blemiſh, and taken out of their flocks. If the lamb had had any bodily blemiſh or defect, it would not have been an acceptable ſacrifice. In like manner, as Jeſus Chriſt was born in a miraculous manner, he is totally freed from all moral pollution, and is therefore declared to be without blemiſh or ſpot. That the antitype might correſpond to the type, it was neceſſary he ſhould be born in this extraordinary manner.

2. The paſchal lamb was to be killed by the whole aſſembly of the people, by the moſt copious effuſion of its blood, and to be roaſted with fire.

In like manner, the various eſtates of the Jewiſh nation, prieſts, ſcribes, elders, rulers,

ers, and the populace in general, all with one heart and tongue pronounced ſentence and executed it upon Chriſt the Lamb of God. His holy head and temples were torn with the deriſive crown of thorns, his bleſſed ſides pierced with the murdering ſpear, and his blood ſhed on the croſs. Add to this, that as the lamb was roaſted with fire, ſo Chriſt endured, on our account, the fierceneſs of his Father's wrath, which is ſaid to burn like fire.

3. The type and its antitype reſemble each other, in the place where, and time when, each was ſlain as a ſacrifice. The paſchal lamb was ordered by God to be ſacrificed at Jeruſalem, "the place which the Lord ſhould "chuſe to put his name there." There was Chriſt alſo ſacrificed, and the time was the ſame in both too; for Chriſt ſuffered the ſame evening on which the paſſover was celebrated.

4. The benefits of the paſchal lamb were conveyed to the Iſraelites, by ſprinkling the blood of it upon their door-poſts; ſo it is by the ſprinkling the blood of Chriſt upon our hearts, that we can be ſaved from the curſe. Hence his blood is called the blood of ſprinkling.

5. The paſſover was to be eaten with bit-

ter

ter herbs, and unleavened bread; ſignifying, that as theſe bitter herbs pointed out the ſufferings of the Iſraelites in Egypt, that we ought not only to eat Chriſt our paſſover with the bitter herbs of repentance, but lay our account to have fellowſhip with him in his ſufferings, and to keep the feaſt with the unleavened bread of ſincerity and truth.

Laſtly, The lamb was to be eaten in the habit and poſture of travellers, with their ſtaffs in their hands; intimating, that our table will ſoon be drawn; that we are ſoon to retire from it; that we are upon a journey; that we are pilgrims and ſtrangers, and ought therefore to be always ready for our journey.

Secondly, The ends of Chriſt's death, and the purpoſes for which this Lamb was ſlain.

To enumerate all the ends of Chriſt's death, would lead me far beyond the bounds preſcribed to one diſcourſe; I ſhall, therefore, confine myſelf to ſuch of them as ſeem peculiarly applicable to the purpoſe of our preſent meeting.

1. He was ſlain, that an atonement might be made for ſin, and its guilt expiated.

As ſoon as man ſinned, he violated the divine law, and contracted guilt, which bound him over to the puniſhment of that law:

That

That the authority of the law might be preſerved; that the power of its ſanctions, awful, but juſt, might be maintained; and that the divine diſpleaſure againſt ſin might be ſhewn, it was decreed, by an expreſs conſtitution of heaven, that without the ſhedding of blood there could be no remiſſion of ſin; that the veſſels of mercy therefore might be ſaved, Chriſt was appointed our paſſover; and, as the Lamb of God, he behoved to be ſlain. As it was the ſhedding of the blood of the paſchal lamb, under the law, that expiated the legal guilt of the Jews; ſo it is the ſhedding the blood of Chriſt the Lamb of God, under the goſpel, that takes away the guilt of the ſin of the world. In a word, as it was only by the blood of atonement, and the ſprinkling it upon their door-poſts, that the Iſraelites were preſerved from the hand of the deſtroying angel; ſo it is only by Chriſt's being our propitiation, and by the ſprinkling of his blood upon our hearts, that we are ſaved from the curſe and malediction of the broken law.

2. It was neceſſary that Chriſt the Lamb of God ſhould be ſlain, that the Holy Ghoſt might come and ſanctify our hearts, to prepare us for the promiſed land. Under the law, thoſe who neglected to ſprinkle their door-

door-poſts with the blood of the paſchal lamb, fell a victim to the ſword of the deſtroying angel; whereas thoſe who did ſo, in obedience to the divine command, were ſpared, and ſuppoſed fit to be conducted into the land of promiſe, as ſanctified perſons and dedicated unto God. Agreeable to this, that the heirs of the ſpiritual Canaan might be prepared for an entrance into it, it was neceſſary that their guilt ſhould be expiated by blood. This was done when Chriſt the Lamb of God was ſlain. But then, that the remedy might be effectual, it was neceſſary that this blood ſhould be ſprinkled upon their hearts. This could only be done by the holy Spirit. According to the divine conſtitution, eſtabliſhing the order of things, Chriſt's work behoved to be finiſhed upon earth, and his return to his Father effected, before the Spirit could come for the purpoſe above mentioned. It was therefore neceſſary, that Chriſt the Lamb of God ſhould be ſlain, that the way might be prepared for the Spirit's coming to ſprinkle this blood upon our hearts, that we might be ſanctified; and, in conſequence of being thereby dedicated to God, prepared for an entrance into the ſpiritual Canaan. Agreeable to this view of things, Chriſt ſays, John xvi. 7. "It is expedient

"for

" for you that I go away: for if I go not " away the Comforter will not come unto " you."

3. Chriſt the Lamb of God was ſlain, that food might be prepared for the maintenance of the ſpiritual life in our ſouls, during our journey through this wilderneſs.

Beſides the animal life derived from the firſt Adam, which is ſupported by the meat that periſheth, the Chriſtian poſſeſſes a ſpiritual life hid with Chriſt in God, received from him as the ſecond Adam. As no life can exiſt for any ſpace of time without food, it follows, that this life muſt be maintained and reared by ſome kind of food that is ſuitable to its nature. As it is a new life, and very different from the old one in many reſpects, it follows, that theſe two lives muſt be maintained by different kinds of food. This clearly ſhews us, that as the animal life, derived from the firſt Adam, is ſupported by what is called the meat that periſheth; ſo the ſpiritual life, derived from Chriſt the ſecond Adam, muſt be reared by what is called the meat that endureth to everlaſting life. What this meat is, our Lord himſelf clearly ſhews us, when he ſays, " My fleſh is meat " indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." Chriſt the Lamb of God then is the food of the

the Chriſtian's ſpiritual life; and, that this meat might be prepared for us, it was neceſſary, that he ſhould be ſlain. As the paſchal lamb behoved to be ſlain, and to be roaſted with fire, that it might be proper food for the Iſraelites; equally neceſſary was it, that Chriſt the Lamb of God ſhould ſuffer and be ſlain, that he might be food for the Chriſtian during his journey through the wilderneſs into the land of promiſe. A ſymbolical repreſentation you have of this food in the ordinance of the ſupper; and as the Iſraelites were commanded by law to eat the paſchal lamb whole, ſo this circumſtance teaches, that when you eat the fleſh, and drink the blood of the Son of God at his table, you ſhould ſtudy to receive a whole Chriſt in all his offices, characters, and relations.

Thirdly, The date of the Lamb's death,--- "Slain from the foundation of the world."

1. He was virtually ſlain in the divine decree, from the foundation of the world, from all eternity.

As God is an eternal and omniſcient being, we cannot ſuppoſe that time with him has any period, paſt, preſent, and to come, as with us. He views things that are not, as though they were; and every object, paſt, preſent,

preſent, and to come, is in one full view before his all-ſeeing eyes. Foreſeeing, therefore, the abuſe which fallible man would make of the freedom of his will, and the derangement which he would thereby occaſion in the divine adminiſtrations, from eternity, in the councils of peace, he provided a remedy, by the appropriating his Son as a Lamb to be ſlain from the foundation of the world. We may add to this, that, as it is generally thought Adam continued but a few days in the ſtate of innocence; and as the firſt promiſe was emitted immediately after the fall, or, which is the ſame thing, ſpeedily after the commencement of time; that therefore Chriſt is with peculiar ſignificancy ſaid to be a Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world.

2. Chriſt is properly ſaid to be a Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world, becauſe thouſands of years before he was actually ſlain, many old teſtament ſaints were ſaved by his death.

Chriſt was deſigned by God to be the Saviour of the ends of the earth. The elect of all nations were to be ſaved by him. If he had not therefore been virtually ſlain in the divine decree, thoſe who lived previous to the date of his being actually ſlain, would not

have reaped the benefits of his death. But as myriads of old teſtament worthies were to be veſſels of mercy, as well as thoſe who lived after his incarnation, and were to be ſaved by his death, it was neceſſary that his ſacrifice ſhould begin to operate from eternity, that the full ends of it might be accompliſhed. Had he not been virtually ſlain from eternity in the divine decree, thoſe who lived and died before his actual death, could not have had that actual benefit from it which they now otherwiſe reap.

From what has been ſaid we may naturally infer,

1. That acceſs to God is procured to us, by the ſlaying of the Lamb.

In the few but happy days of innocence, man correſponded immediately with God. There was then no need of any medium of correſpondence, becauſe he was innocent: But as ſoon as ſin entered, man became, on account of its contaminating nature, incapable of communion with God, and God could not, conſiſtently with his holineſs and hatred of ſin, admit him to any intimacy with him. He was therefore expelled paradiſe, to teach him, that now all correſpondence betwixt

twixt him and his Maker was diſſolved. If a new correſpondence was to be entered into betwixt them, it was neceſſary, for the honour of God, that it ſhould be by the interpoſition of a Mediator. This Mediator is Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God. In conſequence of his being ſlain, and fulfilling the terms of his mediatorſhip, the Father is again rendered acceſſible to Jew and Gentile indiſcriminately. By this conſtitution of things, no man can come unto the Father, but by the Son; and by the ſame conſtitution, all who are in union with the Son are entitled to communion with the Father as their privilege.

2. Salvation is only attainable by the ſlaying of the Lamb of God.

Blood behoved to be ſhed before man could be ſaved. A ſacrifice was to be offered before God could be propitious. This blood was ſhed, and this ſacrifice offered, by the Lamb ſlain. In conſequence of this, it is evident to a demonſtration, that our ſervices can only be accepted in virtue of the acceptance of Chriſt's ſacrifice of himſelf; and therefore we can never be ſaved, unleſs by faith we enter into his ſacrifice and death, being conformed unto it, and homologate

and

and make our own deed what he did in our name, and as our federal head, upon the croſs.

Laſtly, Our duty to this ſlain Lamb is to remember his death in the ordinance of his ſupper, and afterwards to walk as becomes thoſe who are conformed to him in his death.

Now, to the Lamb that once was ſlain,
Be endleſs bleſſings paid:
Salvation, glory, joy remain
For ever on thy head.

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE XVI.

MAN'S REDEMPTION only by JESUS CHRIST. *

COLOSS. i. 14.

In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveneſs of ſins.

SHOULD a ſtranger throw an eye into this world, and look at the different appearances and purſuits of men, how would he be ſtruck with ſurpriſe? What different conjectures would he make, when he ſees ſuch enmity ſubſiſting amongſt us? The ſwords of different nations reeking with the blood of one another, private quarrels and animoſities carried to the moſt exceſſive height: Some

* Theſe diſcourſes which follow, were compoſed by the Author juſt immediately after he got licence, before he was twenty years of age.—They give us a ſpecimen of his knowledge in divinity, and talents in compoſition, in the firſt period of his life. So far the reader will find the account given of the author to be agreeable to truth.—The firſt was preached at Alnwick, Sept. 22. 1765. The ſecond alſo at Alnwick, October 20. the ſame year. And the third at Jedburgh, June 25. 1765.

Some borne down by the ſtraits of poverty; others emaciated to a ſtaggering ſkeleton by a lingering diſeaſe: Some, loaded with extreme age, with difficulty draw after them their enfeebled limbs; others reproached and aſperſed by their neighbours, and perfidiouſly betrayed by them who were reckoned their faithful friends. How would his ſurpriſe heighten when he ſaw this emnity extend to the brutal tribe, the ſtrong devouring the weak, the great preying upon the ſmall ones?

Certainly he never would imagine that this beautiful garden of a world was ever deſigned by its Creator to be the ſeat of miſery, or the repoſitory of miſerable objects. No, he never would. But how would he be loſt in wonder when he was informed, that man, by his own folly, entailed this train of miſeries upon himſelf! Would he not be aſtoniſhed when he heard, that this little monoſyllable *Sin* was the occaſion of all theſe reelings and revolutions in the world. Yes, *Sin* that brat of the devil, has been the cauſe of all the calamities that have been, that are at preſent, or that ever will be in this world. After this beautiful world was made; after all nature was put in its neat proportion and ſymmetry, all was diſarranged by this monſter

ſter ſtarting up its frightful head. Was it not the effects of ſin that made one of the firſt brothers that ever was in the world embrue his unrelenting hand in the innocent blood of the other? Was it not ſin that made the ungrateful Joab ſtab to the heart the beautiful Abſalom? Was it not ſin that made the earth open its jaws and ſwallow up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram? Was it not ſin that made the diſciple perfidiouſly betray his Lord? Is it not ſin that made God become man, and change his heaven (I may ſay) for a heath? Was it not ſin that made the Son of God a man of ſorrows and acquainted with grief? Was it not ſin that made him to be buffetted, ſpit upon, and ſcourged? That made the nerves, ſinews, and tendons of his hands and feet to be pierced with rude nails? Was it not ſin that made his ſacred body be ſuſpended as it were upon a rack for ſix painful hours? And was it not ſin that made all the ſluices of divine vengeance run out upon his ſacred ſoul?

All this revolution muſt take place upon this immaculate innocent perſon, before we can be redeemed from the power, the dominion, and the conſequences of ſin. Our life cannot be kept within us, unleſs that of another

nother be expelled. Our blood cannot be kept in our veins, but at the expence of the effuſion of the Son of God's. Our health cannot continue, unleſs the Son of God be made ſick. We cannot be made free unleſs the Son of God become a ſervant. Awful as this ſcene is, it muſt all be performed before we can be happy.

This wiſe and rational ſcheme of our redemption by the blood of Chriſt, the apoſtle Paul ſeems to take a peculiar pleaſure in expatiating upon. Experience is the beſt teacher; he had felt the power of it in turning him from a perſecutor to a preacher, and therefore could ſpeak more feelingly of it. Such pleaſure has he in it, that he does not always adhere to the critical nicety of a natural introduction. An eminent inſtance of this we have in the text. The verſes preceeding the 11th, are employed in giving thanks to God, for the ſucceſs of the goſpel among the Coloſſians. In the 12th verſe he mentions God the Father as the great contriver, or efficient cauſe, of that work, whereby he makes the elect fit to partake of heaven. "Giving thanks unto the Father, "who hath made us meet to be partakers "of the inheritance of the ſaints in light." Now, at the very mentioning the name of

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the Son, in the end of the 13th verſe, his heart warms, his gratitude kindles, and with a tranſporting pleaſure catches at his favourite ſubject, and purſues it from the text to verſe 23d.

In the preſent diſcourſe I intend to explain the nature of our redemption; and for this purpoſe ſhall proſecute it under the following diviſions. I will,

I. Make ſome remarks on the character of the Redeemer himſelf, in order to ſhew who and what he is.

II. Illuſtrate the nature of this redemption which we have in him.

III. Aſcertain ſome of its peculiar properties.

IV. Open up the forgiveneſs of ſins, which is here conſidered as a prime attribute of our redemption.

V. I will make ſome remarks on the price of our redemption, the blood of Chriſt.

I. I am then to mark the character of the Redeemer himſelf, in order to ſhew who and what he is.

1. He is *God* in all things equal with the Father. It would be needleſs to detain you with a laborious proof of Chriſt's divinity, and to obviate the objections made againſt it. You will anticipate me in thoſe texts that in-

diſputably prove it. Heb. i. 3. "Who being "the brightneſs of his glory, and expreſs "image of his perſon, and upholding all "things by the word of his power, &c." In the ſacred volume he is deſcribed as ſelf-exiſtent and independent. There all the titles and attributes, works, and worſhip, the property of the Father, are aſcribed to the Son.

His equality with the Father was eſſentially neceſſary for performing the arduous work he was engaged in. This was a branch of character requiſite to him who was to bear the wrath of God due to ſin. Had he not been God, he never could have withſtood that deluge of wrath which was let out upon his ſoul, and which would have burnt to death ten thouſand creations. This character of divinity, could only ſtamp an infinite dignity and efficacy upon his ſufferings, ſo as to make an atonement to the Father, and purchaſe redemption to the elect. So that you ſee this was an eſſential branch of his character.

2. Another part of the character of our Redeemer is, that he is *man*. A ſtrange compoſition indeed! A God, and yet a man! A divine and human nature ſubſiſting in one perſon! And yet his office required it, that he ſhould have a real reaſonable ſoul, and a real

real human body formed of the ſubſtance of the woman that bore him.

The law he was to fulfil required that he ſhould be man; for a God, you know, could not be ſubject to it. The fulfilling of the law was originally preſcribed to the human nature, therefore it was neceſſary that it ſhould be aſſumed in conjunction with the divine. This law required, that the ſame nature that ſinned ſhould ſuffer; therefore, a Redeemer in the nature of angels could not have ſaved man: And farther, as the price ſet upon our redemption was blood, this price, you know, could not be paid by a Redeemer, but in the character of man. "As "the children to be redeemed were partakers "of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf took "part of the ſame," Heb. ii. 14.

3. Our Redeemer is *God and man* in one perſon. O admirable conſtitution indeed! It was neceſſary that the Saviour ſhould die; who could do this but man? It was requiſite that the ſame Saviour ſhould overcome death; in whoſe power was that but that of a God? So that it was neceſſary that he ſhould be both God and man in one perſon, that ſo what was done by the human nature, might have its value and efficacy by means of its union with the divine.

Now,

Now, from this deſcription of the Redeemer's character, you ſee how well he was qualified for his office. As God he had a right to the elect, though they had baſely ſold themſelves to Satan; therefore, it was lawful for him to reclaim his own property again: And then, as man, he had a propinquity of brotherhood to them, and therefore, according to law, the right of redemption was the property of the kinſman; conſequently, as our Redeemer took upon him our nature, he had a legal right to us as our kinſman and brother. Now, could any character be more accompliſhed for the work than this? Had he been man only, how could death have been overcome? had he been God only, how could he have died? His very name is deſcriptive of his fitneſs and ability for his office; Lord, Jeſus, Chriſt, *i. e.* Jehovah, Saviour, Anointed: The firſt is expreſſive of his divine nature; the ſecond is ſignificant of his office as Redeemer; the third of his deſignation to that office, with all the qualifications neceſſary for the faithful diſcharge of it.

Now, the character of the Redeemer being thus deſcribed, you'll be anxious to know the nature of the redemption purchaſed by him; and therefore, I proceed,

II. To

II. To illuſtrate the nature of the redemption we have in him.

1. It is a redemption from the *law* as a covenant of works, Gal. iii. 13. "Chriſt hath "redeemed us from the curſe of the law." The moral law is that holy juſt and good will of God made known and promulged to his creatures in all theſe particulars wherein he requires their perfect obedience in order to their happineſs. This law Adam, who was the only perfect mere man, tried to live by, but, failing in the hazardous enterprize, could not, and immediately died. In conſequence of this, all his poſterity fell under its ſevere curſe, which comprehends in it all that is dreadful in earth or hell; nothing to be feared in time or eternity but what is included in it. "Curſed be he that confirm-"eth not all the words of this law to do "them." Deut. xxvii. 26. Its peremptory command and condition is, Do this and live; and it can abate nothing of its demands, but requires unremitted, unlimited, univerſal obedience; and upon the leaſt tranſgreſſion condemns to death the ſinner, and paſſes ſentence upon him. It comes to the ſinner, and loudly anathematizes him. Curſed be your mind; curſed be your ſoul; curſed be your heart; curſed be your ſtrength; for by all

all theſe you ſhould have kept, but you have broken the law: To this law, ſtrict and rigid as it is, Chriſt ſubjected himſelf in your ſtead, and perfectly obeyed its dictates, and ſatisfied its demands. The debt we owed to this law was paid by him. What we ought to have done, was done by him; he ſuffered what was to be inflicted upon us; he was made ſin, that we might be ſanctified; he was made a curſe, that we might be cured. Now, by a regular courſe of obedience to its demands performed by the Saviour, that debt which would have ruined all mankind thro' eternity, was diſcharged, ſo that the law has no more claim upon us.

2. It is a redemption from *ſin*. Sin is that canker that has eat to death the ſouls of all Adam's poſterity; it is that viper that ſtung our Saviour to death. It went up to heaven, and brought down to hell a choir of the angelic tribe. It is a load that has lien upon the necks of ſinners; and, had it not been for the Saviour, would have borne them all down to hell. Now, from the power and dominion of this execrable monſter we are freed by this redemption. Sin has the aſcendent over every unbeliever; it obliges him to work the ſevereſt work, and at laſt gives him death for his wages. Now from our

ſervitude

ſervitude to this haughty maſter, Chriſt our Redeemer has freed us; he has broken its power, ſubdued its ſtrength, and forcibly beat down its ſtrong holds. It may ſometimes indeed play the tyrant, but the contrary principle of grace reigning within every believer, fights againſt it, and, under the conduct of the Redeemer, keeps ſecure that power which it wanted to uſurp. Sin was once in poſſeſſion of the heart of every believer, and the tyrant, ambitious to retake his kingdom, often rallies his broken forces, and makes an attack upon the believer, and is even ſometimes ready to caſt him down; but grace, powerful and mighty, under the conduct and direction of the Redeemer, baffles his efforts, and beats him out again.

3. It is a redemption from *Satan* our grand adverſary.

By the fall all mankind ſold themſelves to Satan, and were the property of this accurſed fiend. This mercileſs conqueror led us captive, laid us in chains, and lodged us in his dark gloomy priſon, where we were confined to conſtant and ſevere labour. Out of the jaws of this roaring lion our Redeemer reſcued us. Chriſt broke the priſon-doors, and proclaimed theſe joyful news to the dejected captives, "I am thy deliverer; I have pro-

"cured

" cured your liberation, go forth, you are free."

After the price was paid by the Redeemer, none of our enemies had any legal claim or title to us; yet the devil their head and leader, ſometimes uſurps authority; and though he cannot retrieve what he unjuſtly reckoned his property, yet he is frequently making aſſaults upon God's people; and though he cannot ſteal them, yet he will ſtun them with his noiſe; for " he goes about like a roaring " lion, ſeeking whom he may devour." But notwithſtanding theſe attempts, the whole united force of hell ſhall never prevail againſt them.

4. It is a redemption from *wrath* to come. This is the direful conſequence of ſin, and comprehends in it whatſoever is penal or afflictive in its nature through all eternity. One drop of the wrath of God would have burnt to death the whole creation. The elect, as well as others, would have ſuffered the ſcourge of this wrath through an endleſs eternity. This was their portion; this was what they all richly deſerved. They had ſinned, and juſt it was that they ſhould ſuffer. From this inconceivable puniſhment the elect are happily freed by this redemption. Pain was their portion, but pleaſure they have obtained. Theſe very perſons who before were the ſubjects

jects of his wrath, are now the objects of his love. Thoſe very perſons whom before he could not look upon but with abhorrence, he now beholds with exceeding joy, and nothing ſhall ever ſeparate them from his love; neither death, nor life, nor angels,—nor any other creature, &c. Rom. viii. 38.

5. It is a redemption from a preſent *evil world*. Perhaps there may be ſome, whoſe God this world is, who may reckon that to be redeemed from the world is no encomium upon this redemption. But this world is one of the moſt dangerous enemies the Chriſtian has to encounter. This is an enemy the more dangerous and deceitful, becauſe not ſo open and declared. It is continually laying ſnares to deceive, while he thinks it is laying out its embraces to receive him. Under the falſe appearance of favouring, it is really frowning at him. While he vainly imagines it is careſſing, it in the end turns out only to be croſſing him. Now, from the ſmiles, as well as the frowns of this world, which are equally hurtful, the Chriſtian is freed by this redemption.

6. It is a redemption from *death*. Death is the king of terrors, and terror of kings. He knocks at the palaces of kings as well as the huts of peaſants. The prince and the cottager are all equally ſubject to his laſh. But

behold this mighty conqueror conquered! behold the ſpoiler ſpoiled! behold the ſtinger unſtinged! The Prince of peace entered his dark abode, and ranſacked his gloomy cell; he has not only obtained a complete victory over him, but he has ſwallowed him up in it. Now, this conqueror that had ſtalked up and down the world irreſiſtibly celebrating his triumphs over the ſons of Adam, is foiled. Now, the Chriſtian may call upon death to do his utmoſt: Now, the monſter is turned into an angel's face: Now the Chriſtian can ſay, "O death, where is thy ſting," He may indeed ſtrike once, but all the hurt he can do the Chriſtian is to put it abſolutely out of his power ever to hurt him more. Suffer me to add,

Laſtly, It is a redemption from the grave. The ſhroud, the mattock, and the knell are alarming words to mankind. The dark manſions of the grave ſtrike a terror in the breaſts of mortals, but Chriſt has plundered his den; the bodies as well as the ſouls of believers are the ſubjects of Chriſt's purchaſe. The body of a believer conſigned to the grave, to moulder in that dark abode, ſhall be raiſed again, and its diſſeminated parts reunited. But how? Shall it put on corruption? No: Shall it be ſubject to croſſes? No: This mortal ſhall put on immortality, this body ſhall be

be faſhioned after the manner of Chriſt's glorious body; this corruptible ſhall put on incorruption.

Having thus deſcribed the general character of this redemption, I am,

III. To mark ſome of its peculiar properties.

1. It is a *coſtly* redemption. All mankind were ſold by Adam their repreſentative for a little fruit; but they cannot be purchaſed again at any price below the blood of Chriſt. Corruptible things, ſuch as ſilver and gold, (ſays the apoſtle Peter) could not redeem us, but the precious blood of Chriſt only. This was the only equivalent for immortal ſouls. What a price was this? O! Chriſtian, did you but value your ſouls half as much as Chriſt did! The blood of angels could not purchaſe them; nay, the blood of the whole creation could not redeem the elect world. Nothing leſs than the blood of God-man was a price equivalent to their value; nay, I may ſay, more was neceſſary than ſimply laying down his life. His time he ſpent for you, no leſs than thirty three years were employed upon your account, and in what ſituation was he attended? With a numerous retinue? No. Was the Prince of peace careſſed by the nobles of the world? No, he was in the form of a ſervant. Was he entertained with the delicacies of the great? No, he was not allowed the common fare

of

of beaſts; for "the foxes had holes, and the "birds of the air had neſts, but the Son of "man had not where to lay his head." After he had ſuffered the extremeſt poverty, the baſeſt uſage, and the moſt exquiſite ſufferings, then he laid down his life. Now, the redemption of the elect was purchaſed. After one talent was paid out, after that, another; till at laſt he paid down his very blood.

2. It is a *ſeaſonable* redemption. When Iſaac was laid bound upon the altar, and his aged Father's hand ſuſpended to give the laſt blow to the life of his dear ſon, an angel ſeaſonably interpoſed, Hold thy hand, do him no harm. Equivalent to this was our caſe, the neck of the elect was laid upon the block, the ſword of the divine vengeance was ſuſpended to ſtrike it off? Chriſt the Redeemer cries, Stop, do them no harm: "Lo! I come." I will ſave their neck, by putting mine in the place of it. Was not this a ſeaſonable redemption, when, I may ſay, one moment's delay, would have ruined the whole elect for ever. Anxious to enter upon his arduous work, Chriſt watches the proper opportunity. He allowed the world to try if their ſtrength would redeem them; it would not do: He allows them to try their wiſdom; it fails alſo: he allowed them to make uſe of their wealth for that purpoſe; this expedient

was

was unſuccesful too; nothing they could do would ſave them from the ſentence of the law. Their neck therefore is laid upon the block, then does Chriſt interpoſe, *Lo, I come.*

3. It is a redemption by *power*. When Pharaoh detained the Iſraelites, day after day, God takes a ſoft method to prevail with him to diſmiſs them; he tries him by mercies, but his unrelenting heart is inacceſſible, till at laſt, provoked by his obſtinacy, God obliges him by judgements to let them go. Not unſimilar to this is the caſe of the elect: Chriſt had, by paying down an equivalent, ſatisfied the demands of the broken law, and yet ſo obſtinate are our enemies, Sin and Satan, to whom we are enſlaved, that they will not let us go: To make good his property, he finds it neceſſary to ſtretch out an arm of power, and redeem us by it. He ſinks the maſſy chain of the covenant into the pit where the elect ly, faſtens it about them; Satan greedily keeps his hold, till at laſt he is obliged to yield to the ſuperior power of the Redeemer.

4. It is a *free* and *voluntary* redemption. After Adam had broken the covenant, he had no legal claim to life. Therefore it muſt be mere mercy that ſaved him and his poſterity, at ſuch a coſtly rate. They had provoked God, they had broke his holy law; there was nothing engaging about them.

Had

Had he made choice of proper objects to ſerve him, no doubt the angels would have been his choice. Upon their being reſtored, they would have ſerved him much better than we. But his mercy made choice of us; not that he deſigned we ſhould refund the price paid for our redemption: No; he intended after our redemption to feed us, to ſupply us with every neceſſary, and that we ſhould live and die debtors to his free grace.

5. It is a *full* and *complete* redemption. In our natural ſtate, the devil had a claim upon us; ſin had a claim upon us; and God's law put in for a ſhare too. Unhappy ſtate indeed! divided betwixt two ſevere maſters, and the property of an equally ſevere law! But now, who can lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Can the devil? No; Can ſin? No: Can the law? No; all theſe former pretenders muſt quit their claims. For Chriſt has purchaſed their immunity and freedom from them all. Suffer me to add,

Laſtly, It is an *eternal* ſalvation. The durable and laſting nature of any preſent good, enhances greatly the value of it, and the more durable it is, the more valuable of conſequence it becomes. How valuable then muſt this redemption be, which is eternal in the heavens, and ſhall never know an end? How may this raiſe our eſtimation of it? Amen.

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE XVII.

MAN'S REDEMPTION only by JESUS CHRIST.

COLOSS. i. 14.

In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveneſs of ſins.

IN the former diſcourſe I have deſcribed the character of the Redeemer, and the nature of the redemption purchaſed by him, and marked ſome of its diſtinguiſhing properties. I now proceed,

IV. To explain the forgiveneſs of ſins, which, in the text, is conſidered as a prime attribute of our redemption. And,

1. The forgiving of ſin, is an exemption of the ſinner from the guilt of it, which is an obligation to puniſhment; and not a taking away of its nature, or its intrinſic demerit. No; pardoned ſin is ſtill ſin: but it is an indemnifying of the ſinner, a looſing his obligation to puniſhment. Guilt binds the ſinner to puniſhment; God's pardoning mercy cuts this tie, looſes guilt and avenging wrath from one another; and ſays,

Deliver

Deliver the ſinner; let him go, I have found a ranſom. Now, this is the nature of forgiveneſs of ſins. And we may obſerve,

2. That the forgiving of ſins is God's ſpecial prerogative, Micah vii. 18. "Who is "a God like unto thee, that pardoneth ini-"quity, and paſſeth by the tranſgreſſion of "the remnant of his heritage?" God is the party offended by ſin, conſequently he alone can forgive it; for none can pardon an offence that was committed againſt another. There ſeems to be a ſtriking analogy betwixt the work of nature, and the work of grace; and yet the latter appears to have required a ſtronger exertion of power, wiſdom, and mercy, than the former. This would appear very ſurpriſing, and yet the book of God gives its ſanction to it. There it is expreſsly declared, that his tender mercies are above all his other works. His wiſdom and power created all nature out of nothing, and arranged it in its preſent order, ſymmetry and proportion. Theſe ſame attributes, in conjunction with his mercy, created a pure and a holy creature not out of nothing, but the two very contrary principles of guilt and ſin. Here was darkneſs made light! Confuſion made order! And guilt made grace? But another part of the forgiveneſs of ſin is,

3. When

3. When God forgives one sin, he forgives all, Psal. ciii. 3. "Who forgiveth all thine "iniquities." All original and actual sins, sins of omission and commission; sins against God, our neighbour, and ourselves, are all included in the act of indemnity. This act of forgiveness also extends to such sins as a saint may fall into through the course of his life, This is necessary and proper; for, if a person in a justified state is actually liable to eternal wrath for the sin he may commit; while in that state, he must either fall from his union with Christ, or else he must be in Christ, and in a state of condemnation at the same time. To suppose which is absurd; for the one is indissolvable, and the other impossible: Therefore, when the saints fall into sin, their pardon in respect of God's act is not renewed. The act is complete at once.

4. God forgives the sinner freely. Life seems to be cheap bought, when purchased at any rate. It is an easy acquisition when obtained by importunity: But God freely granted our life without solicitation: He seemed as ready to grant it as the sinner was to receive it. Scarce had man fallen, till God sets about raising him up: scarce had he sinned, till God saves him, and that not upon his promises of repenting and reforming: no; but freely and out of mere mercy. Man had no equivalent

to give for his life. Had he repented till his body had been diſſolved into a maſs of tears, could this have repaired God's honour, and the broken law? Had he actually reformed his life, could the contracting no more debt have diſcharged the former? But none of theſe he could do; nor though he could, they would not have ſubſerved any valuable purpoſe; therefore our ſalvation is merely the effect of mercy. Man ſinned; what was the natural conſequence? He was in the hand of juſtice. But now, bleſſed be God, we can ſay, Man ſinned, and God of his mercy ſaved him from the hands of law and juſtice, and from the hands of all his enemies.

5. This act of grace in forgiving of ſins, can never be repealed or revoked. The ſoul, that happy ſoul that has its ſins pardoned, need be under no apprehenſion that he ſhall fall into condemnation; for "whom the Lord "loves, he loves to the end." Perhaps, indeed, through the prevalence of ſin and corruption, the remains of which ſtill continue within him, the ſenſe of his pardon may be loſt, and the evidences of his forgiveneſs obſcured. Through this cloud the people of God ſometimes paſs. But be not diſcouraged at this. Conſcience and the law may accuſe you; but Chriſt has excuſed you. Is it not expreſsly ſaid, that "there is no condemnation to them

"who

"who are in Chriſt Jeſus," Rom. viii. 1. No condemnation; no, none at all. Sin ſhall not condemn you; the devil ſhall not condemn you; your enemies ſhall not condemn you: The royal act of indemnity is paſt, and it ſhall never be reſcinded. Chriſt has ſaid, Be thou whole; who ſhall ſay, Be thou ſick? Chriſt has ſaid, Be thou clean; who ſhall ſay, Be thou foul? I proceed,

V. To make ſome remarks on the price of our redemption, the blood of Chriſt.

The death of Chriſt was in the eye of divine wiſdom the only ranſom for ſinners; therefore it behoved him who had no ſin, to be made ſin for us. That his blood was the only proper price, and why it was, will appear from the following reaſons.

1. Becauſe his blood was the laſt part of the payment, and which cancelled the bond. Chriſt, by his incarnation, paid out one talent for our redemption; by his holy induſtrious life, he paid another; and by his ſatisfactory death, and the effuſion of his precious blood, he paid the third and laſt. By his blood he blotted out and cancelled our death and ſentence that was writ in the covenant of works; and by his blood he writ our life and abſolvitor in the covenant of grace; by his blood he expunged that large catalogue of our ſins that bound us over to everlaſting wrath; by his

his blood he gave the finiſhing ſtroke, laid the laſt ſtone upon the fabric of our redemption.

2. Another reaſon why his blood was the proper price of our redemption was, that it might correſpond to the type in the old law. When the deſtroying angel was to paſs thro' Egypt, and to ſmite every firſt-born, both of man and beaſt, Moſes is directed to this expedient to ward off the blow; he is ordered to ſlay a lamb, and to ſprinkle the blood of it on the lintel, and the ſide-poſts of the doors. This was to be the ſign to the deſtroying angel; looking upon this he was to paſs over the houſe, and ſtrike no blow. Now, like the deſtroying angel, the wrath of God was ready to ſtrike the blow upon ſinners, the blood of Chriſt is therefore poured out, ſprinkled upon our ſouls, which appeaſed divine wrath, and fully anſwered the type.

In ſcripture, the blood of Chriſt is, by a ſynecdoche, frequently put for the whole merit of his life and death, of his actions and ſufferings, which ſatisfied God's juſtice, and magnified God's law; which made propitiation for iniquity, and brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs. Rom. v. 9. "Much more then be-
"ing now juſtified by his blood, we ſhall be
"ſaved from wrath through him." Well does the apoſtle call it *precious blood*. Precious in its nature and effects: In its nature, not the blood

blood of a man only, not the blood of a prophet, not the blood of an angel; but the blood of a God-man. In its effects, it heals the mortal wounds of the ſoul, it appeaſes the wrath of God, it makes peace between an offended Creator and an offending creature. Sprinkled upon the conſcience, it takes away all guilt, and ſecures from all vengeance. It is the ſame to our ſouls that the paſchal lamb was to the Iſraelitiſh families.

I have now diſpatched the ſeveral general heads of my method. Let a ſhort addreſs to two very different objects, ſaints and ſinners, conclude the diſcourſe.

1. Allow me to addreſs myſelf to you who have had the happy experience that he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come unto him. Happy ſouls, indeed! To you eternal life is given; not to you who deſerved it by your goodneſs, but to you who had forfeited it by your ſins. To you is preached the forgiveneſs of ſins; not you whoſe tranſgreſſions were inconſiderable, but you whoſe iniquities were more in number than the hairs of your head. How ardent ſhould your love be to your Redeemer, when you reflect on the dangerous circumſtances from which you were redeemed. From a ſtate of deſperate ſlavery, he made you perfectly free; from a ſtate of poverty, he made you rich. Ye were bankrupts

and

and inſolvents, but he freely diſcharged your debt: Ye were under ſentence of death, ye were condemned criminals, but he purchaſed a pardon for you at the expence of his life. How attrocious muſt your crimes be, when nothing but the blood of the Son of God was a ſufficient atonement for them? The blood of the head of this rebellious faction could not ſatisfy offended juſtice; nay, the blood of a part of the faction could not have that effect: no; nothing was an equivalent to your life but the blood of the God-man. This he freely parted with for your ſake. How then ſhould you love him? Love him with all your heart, with all your ſoul, your ſtrength, and your mind. Count all things but loſs in compariſon of him.

How humble ought you to be under this redemption? What little reaſon have you to boaſt? You are ſaved by grace, and will you boaſt? As well might a beggar glory in having ſtretched out his hand to receive an alms, eſpecially if that alms had been given him by a generous phyſician who before had cured him of a diſeaſe by which that hand now ſtretched out to him had been benumbed and diſabled. Write emptineſs (as Mr Hervey finely expreſſes it) on all your duties, emptineſs on your own works, and you ſhall be filled with all the fulneſs of God your Saviour.

Caſt

Caſt your eye on your baſe original, and you will find no cauſe to boaſt; but if you will not be diſſuaded from this, follow the example of St. Paul, who, if any mere man might have been indulged a little in this, it certainly was he: Why? What then does he boaſt in? not in the greatneſs of his learning as a ſcholar: No, all theſe advantages he accounted not better than pompous ignorance, or refined folly; not in the ſtrictneſs of his life as a Jew; not in the eminency of his gifts as a Chriſtian miniſter; no: In none of theſe he gloried, tho' he had very great reaſon as a man to do it. In what then does he glory? Why, he tells us himſelf, that it was the croſs of Chriſt; and God forbid, ſays he, that I ſhould glory in any thing elſe.

Remember you that have felt the power of the goſpel, that you are engaged in God's ſervice, and therefore muſt be careful not to dally with your old friends from whom you were redeemed. Take care of Satan's devices; he will be often laying ſnares to catch you; therefore be cautious leſt you fall into them, and thereby expoſe yourſelf and your religion to the contempt of an inſidious world. Take care of your own heart, which is an enemy as dangerous as any of the former.

Before I leave you, I muſt indulge myſelf a little in enumerating a few of your invaluable

able privileges. What an acquiſition have you made? Chriſt has bequeathed himſelf to you, and every thing elſe. Heaven is yours, and all its happineſs: The miniſters of the goſpel are yours; Paul is yours, Cephas is yours, Apollos is yours: This world is yours, life and death are yours; things preſent, whether viſible or inviſible, and things to come, are all yours. In a word, all in heaven and earth is yours. And what farther aggrandizes your treaſure is, that all your enemies, the gates of hell, ſhall never prevail againſt you. The blood of Chriſt is the charter by which you hold your claim to theſe privileges, good ſecurity indeed! Have you any enemies in the world, their menaces will be muſic in your ears; you have a triple guard againſt them; you are under a hiding-place, a covert, and a ſtrong hold. In ſcripture Chriſt is ſaid to be all theſe to the Chriſtian. Chriſt is the ſafety, as well as the beauty of believers. In ſhort, your ſecurity and refuge are the greateſt that can be wiſhed, that can be imagined, that God can give, "himſelf."

2. But now the lightſome ſcene ſhifts into tragedy. I juſt now was converſing with the pleaſures of heaven, I muſt now review the ghaſtly ſorrows of hell. I juſt now was deſcribing the bleſſings of the child of God, I am now to enumerate the miſeries of the child of the devil. This is that unhappy ſoul that has never felt the power of the goſpel! This is that ſoul that has no ſhare in Chriſt's purchaſe

chaſe, and is no ſubject of his kingdom; but the devil's ſubject, and that object on whom that accurſed fiend has been exerting his malignant influence! O ſinner, how deplorable is thy circumſtances! You are out of Chriſt, this is juſt the ſame as if you were in hell! You have been all your life in bondage; you have never felt the glorious liberty of the goſpel! The goſpel was deſigned to be your ſalvation, but it ſeems, by your folly, you will make it your damnation! It was intended to be your life, but it ſeems to be turned into your death. Chriſt repeated his exhortations to you again and again; he called upon you to come and buy of him, without money and without price; he offered to make you a complement of himſelf and his ſalvation, and your obſtinacy refuſed the beſt of gifts! How wretched was your choice? Heaven was in your offer, and you took hell in its ſtead! God, Chriſt, and angels, offered themſelves for your companions; and you rather chuſed to have your habitation with devils and damned ſpirits. Is it not highly reaſonable, therefore, that you ſhould ſuffer for this obſtinacy? Is it not for this that hell is gaping after you? Is it not for this, that the whole poſſee of hell are eyeing you as their ſure prey, and anxiouſly waiting to receive your damned ſoul into their gloomy abodes? Conſider theſe things ye who forget God, ere it be too late. Think on your folly. And may God give you repentance unto life. Amen.

DISCOURSE XVIII.

NEGLECTERS of SALVATION inexcuſable.

HEB. ii. 3.

How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalvation.

IT is a queſtion not eaſily decided, Whether the anxiety and concern of heaven about the ſalvation of man, or his indolence and indifference about it, is the greateſt wonder. No ſooner had the mortal taſte of the forbidden fruit poiſoned the human pair, than a remedy is promiſed to them: Scarce had the ſerpent, cunning and ſubtle, unhappily beguiled the innocence of the woman, than a revenge againſt it is promiſed to her. Was this conqueſt to be effectuated by God's prophets, or his angels? No: by no leſs a perſonage than his own Son. This Son is ſent from his Father's boſom, to be laughed at by a ridiculous world; and he vails his robes of glory with the rags of human nature. He came down to our world, and though his gracious offer met with a cool reception at firſt, yet he did not quickly return. No: he condeſcended to live among us. As this was the caſe, who would not have expected that the dignity of this noble perſonage, the importance

portance of his doctrines, and the excellency of his life, would have perſuaded the moſt obſtinate heart to ſuch an admiration of his perſon, ſuch a belief of his doctrine, as might have led them to an imitation of the purity of his life? Who would not have expected that the mercifulneſs of his offer, and the reaſonableneſs of his propoſals, would have at leaſt procured him an honourable reception? Who would not have expected, that when pardon of ſin was offered upon ſuch eaſy terms, multitudes would have flocked to his ſtandard, and cordially embraced the happy offer? But inſtead of this, his perſon is deſpiſed, his authority ſlighted, and his doctrine contemned, even by thoſe who enjoyed his perſonal miniſtry. To cure this obſtinacy, the apoſtle reaſons, by a very ſtrong conſequence in the text, and in the two immediately preceding verſes, that ſince God, ſpeaking by the prophets, was to be heard by thoſe to whom they were ſent, much more was he to be heard in the voice of his Son; for, as far as the prophets excelled the ungodly; as far as the angels excelled the prophets; ſo far did he excel the angels. "How ſhall we e-"ſcape," &c. The word HOW is particularly emphatic: So fair is he with them, that he will not himſelf declare it impoſſible for them to eſcape upon neglecting this ſalvation; but he appeals to themſelves, and calls upon them to tell him how they propoſed to eſcape.

The

The laſt clauſe of the verſe is equally emphatic, "so great ſalvation;" he does not ſay, great ſalvation, but he annexes the particle so, to ſuggeſt to us, that its greatneſs could be much better imagined than deſcribed.

We propoſe, in diſcourſing upon this ſubject, the following method.

I. To ſhew in what reſpects this character of *greatneſs* may be aſcribed to the ſalvation offered in the goſpel.

II. To enquire what it is to *neglect* it.

III. To prove the *impoſſibility of eſcaping* the puniſhment threatened upon the neglect of this ſalvation.

May God aſſiſt us in diſpatching theſe particulars, and in adding a word of application ſuggeſted by the tenor of the diſcourſe.

We may obſerve in general, that the goſpel neceſſarily ſuppoſes man in a fallen ſtate, utterly incapacitate to extricate himſelf out of theſe circumſtances, without ſome foreign aid. Since God was pleaſed to provide this aid himſelf, no doubt the objects of this ſalvation were to be ſaved by this aid, from ſin, and its effects, the wrath of God in eternal puniſhment. Sin has the aſcendent over all unbelievers; it engages them to ſerve two of the worſt maſters, the world and Satan. In conſequence of which, they are continually employed in working againſt their own intereſt. What a ſervice, to have the Devil for your maſter, Sin for your ſuperintendent, and

Death

Death and Hell for your reward and wages? All theſe Chriſt has nailed faſt to his croſs. He has wreſted the power out of the Devil's hand, turned Sin out of its poſt, and unſtung Death. But this ſalvation alſo delivers us from the conſequences of ſin, the wrath of God. You would reckon it a particular inſtance of friendſhip, if one whom you had often offended, who only could do it, ſhould relieve you from ſome imminent danger, or cure you of ſome inveterate diſeaſe. Faint reſemblance indeed of Chriſt's friendſhip: He not only delivers you from the diſeaſe, but ſecures you from being ever attacked by it again: He frees you not only from your captivity, but inſures your freedom for ever after.

This account of the nature of the goſpel ſalvation, will introduce us more naturally to our firſt head, which was,

I. To conſider the greatneſs of it.

1. It is great in reſpect of its *Author*, the great God. Did you but diſcover one thouſandth part of the concern for your own ſalvation that God did, there would be reaſon to conceive better hopes of the generality of mankind. Was it not, think ye, a moſt concerning affair when the great God condecended to act a part in the wonderful ſcene? God the Father, againſt whom the offence was committed, condeſcends to employ his wiſdom in ſearching out a ſcheme for the recovery of man. Difficult indeed was the ſcheme,

ſcheme, had it not been for ſuch a contriver! Let ſinners be ſaved, was the univerſal cry: but here the difficulty, what ſhall become of the law and juſtice of God which were ſo deeply involved? Had the angels, theſe glorified ſpirits, attempted this intricate taſk, how ſoon muſt they have been nonpluſſed? Would they not have cried out, What are we to ſuch a taſk? Can we put in order the adminiſtrations of heaven diſarranged by this fatal event? Can we vindicate God's honour, when the way to carry it on to that end to which all things at firſt tended, is ſhut up? Therefore we muſt deſiſt, and prefer the honour of our Maker to the wellbeing of any of his creatures whatever. You then ſee your fate, had the truſt of your ſalvation been committed to angels: But, bleſſed be God, who was only equal to the taſk, that he engaged in. But the greatneſs of this ſalvation will farther appear, if we conſider,

2. That it has Chriſt for its *purchaſer*. After this wiſe ſcheme was contrived, might not God have made his angels the executioners of it? No; no leſs a perſon than his only begotten Son was to be entruſted with ſuch a commiſſion. Down therefore he is ſent from his Father's boſom, to an invidious world; from an effulgence of glory, to roam without a habitation in this wilderneſs; from amidſt the acclamations of angels, to the ſhouts of a mob "Crucify him, crucify him."

Is

Is not this great salvation, that, considering your case, God the Father should allow it? Is it not greater that he should entrust none but his own Son with such a commission? greater that he should smite him to heal you, and wound him to bind your sores up; and greater, that the Son should submit to all this, and should even take your nature to make you happy? Certainly it must have been an affair of the last consequence that brought about such a change as this. But,

3. It is great in respect of its *applier*, God the holy Ghost. Was there ever a work that had three such agents? God the Father contrives the plan, God the Son purchases it, and God the holy Ghost applies it. These privileges purchased by Christ, the Holy Spirit takes and introduces to our souls, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ. We are the sick, or rather the dead body; Christ is the medicine prescribed to us, and the holy Spirit is the great Physician that applies it. Certainly you will imagine a work performed by such agents must produce a very great change on the objects on which it is performed, which in fact is the case: for,

4. It is great in respect of the *effects* it produces. Words fail me to give you an adequate idea of it. Do not you wonder at yourself, Christian, when you consider you are a frail child of dust, and yet an heir of glory? A worm, and yet to be like God. The happy objects of this salvation will be removed

ed from a world where they are complaining of their lot, to another where they will as loudly proclaim the happineſs of it: They will change the reproaches of their invidious neighbours, for the acclamations of choirs of angels: They will go from a ſtate of ignorance, to a perfect knowledge of every thing that can contribute to their felicity! What a tranſport will you feel, when you ſo throughly underſtand thoſe myſteries that had before baffled your moſt diligent ſearch? Ah, bleſſed change! from feud to favour! from reproach to honour! from mourning to rejoicing! from faith to ſight! from hope to fruition! But how mean, how inadequate are our ideas of it? That maſter of eloquence, the apoſtle Paul, attempted to delineate it; but ſoon finding himſelf loſt, immediately ſtops: There, ſays he, I heard words which are not lawful for a man to utter. But it is not for me, it is not for Paul, or Apollos; it is not for the tongue of men or angels to deſcribe it. Humble adoration becomes us beſt, and a thankful acceptance of the pardon purchaſed at ſo dear a rate.

5. It is great in reſpect of its *objects*. Adam our repreſentative, by his own engagement, was to live upon keeping the covenant, and die upon breaking it. Had you any claim to life, when by your own agreement you was to loſe it? Had God executed the ſentence upon you, which you agreed to ſuffer upon breaking the covenant, could you have

ſaid

ſaid that God had forgotten to be gracious? Had he allowed ſin to celebrate a never-ending triumph upon you, could you have ſaid there was injuſtice with God? Had it not been for mercy, you muſt have been doomed to the pit where there is weeping and gnaſhing of teeth. Had it not been for mercy, you muſt have been preyed upon by the worm that never dies through endleſs ages. Had it not been for mercy, you muſt have laboured in the devil's ſervice: Hard work, and bad pay indeed! Is not this, therefore, great ſalvation, which was merely the effect of mercy? Suffer me to add,

Laſtly, It is great in reſpect of its *perpetuity*. The deliverance of the people of Iſrael out of Egypt was great ſalvation; and they who murmured under it, they who deſpiſed the pleaſant land, fell under the hot diſpleaſure of God. But what is this deliverance when compared with our deliverance from ſin and Satan? The one is only a temporal, and the other an eternal ſalvation: The one ended almoſt as ſoon as performed, the other is near as old as the creation, and will laſt with eternity; hence called an *eternal ſalvation*, Heb. v. 9. I now proceed to ſhew,

II. What it is to neglect this ſalvation.

I apprehend it may be occaſioned particularly by unbelief and impenitency.

1. I ſay, it may be neglected by unbelief. There are many that are not perhaps infidels

in opinion, yet are no better than ſuch in practice and in heart. They may believe that there was ſuch a perſon as Jeſus Chriſt, who lived and died in the reign of Tiberius; but this is only a cold ſpeculative belief, which may be poſſeſſed by a perſon of the moſt diſſolute morals. Nay, you may even believe that Chriſt is the Saviour of others, while you do not apply him to yourſelf: This does not free you from the charge of infidelity. Nay, if in your heart you wiſhed that the goſpel was a cunningly deviſed fable; this is likewiſe a neglect of this ſalvation. Unbelief is a ſin againſt the cleareſt light, and moſt extenſive offers of grace. Unbelief is a deſperate exploit which cannot be gained without breaking through every bar of ſenſe. Unbelief is a ſin againſt which the ſevereſt ſentence is pronounced, as awful in its nature, as ſure in its execution, John iii. 36. "He "that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee "life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

2. Another great ſource of the neglect of this ſalvation is impenitency. Chriſt's forerunner, John Baptiſt introduces the goſpel into the world, by exhorting to repentance, "Re-"pent, ſays he, for the kingdom of heaven is "at hand," Mat. iii. 2. This is one of the firſt ſteps in the Chriſtian life; and it is juſt cultivating or preparing the ground of the heart, to receive the ſeed of the goſpel. Without repentance, the heart is juſt an uncultivated

wild,

wild, where nothing but the ſeeds of ſin can grow. Impenitence and heaven, impenitence and receiving Chriſt, are as great abſurdities, as it would be to waſh a negroe white. While ſin unrepented of, keeps the door of the heart, the devil muſt certainly be the inhabitant of the houſe, and therein the goſpel can never enter. Is not this a neglect of the ſalvation, when you harbour in your heart that which was the deſign of the goſpel to root out, and for which ye ſhall never eſcape. This reminds me of my laſt head, *viz.*

III. To prove the impoſſibility of eſcaping in conſequence of neglecting this ſalvation. This is ſo evident, that it almoſt ſuperſedes any proof. For there are only three ways by which you can propoſe to yourſelves to eſcape, 1. By legal acquitment; or, if this fails, 2. By force; or, 3. By fraud. I hope a few arguments will convince you, that all hopes of eſcaping by theſe means are vain and fruitleſs.

1. I ſay you cannot eſcape by legal acquitment. You know the ſentence decretory and irrevocable, "He that believeth not ſhall be "damned," Mark xvi. 16. What can you plead for yourſelf? or, who will undertake to repreſent your plea? You have tranſgreſſed both the rules of the law and goſpel; therefore you cannot plead that God is rigorous: nay, at the laſt ſcene, when God, ſeated upon

on his magnificent throne, ſhall pronounce the ſentence againſt you: You have neglected my offer, you have ſtood out againſt the repeated admonitions of my Son; therefore continue in the ſervice of ſin and Satan, in which you have been engaged all your life. With this ſentence, ſevere as it is, you will be obliged to acquieſce, and acknowledge the juſtneſs of it.

2. You cannot eſcape by force. Can ye combat with that God whoſe word firſt ſpoke all nature into being, and whoſe ſilent volition could again reduce her to her primitive nothing? Can you combat with Chriſt, whoſe looks laid a poſſee of Roman guards flat on the ground? Can you combat with thoſe angels, one of whom laid a well martialled army of eighty-five thouſand men dead upon the ſpot? Can you combat with thoſe apoſtles, two of whom turned a man and woman out of exiſtence in a moment? Unleſs you can perform actions infinitely more heroic than theſe, you never will, you never can eſcape; for not only theſe, but the whole united force of heaven is combined againſt you.

3. You cannot eſcape by fraud. All nature, however vaſt and extenſive, is a ſpace too little to hide from God, to whoſe eye the innermoſt receſſes of the heart are open. There may be ſome who appear to eſcape the viſible marks of God's wrath here; but let them remember, that the drops of wrath which were

to

to be poured upon them here, are kept in God's cup till they appear before him, when they ſhall be thruſt into that infernal priſon, from which they ſhall never be relieved.

I ſhall now conclude with a few inferences.

1. From what has been ſaid we may infer, That all mankind are by nature in a ſtate of miſery, from which they are unable to relieve themſelves. By nature we are in a more miſerable ſituation than the Iſraelites in all their calamities. A pious Iſraelite under the rod of an Egyptian oppreſſor, might have riſen in holy contemplation from the brick kiln, or the dungeon, to the preſence of God his Father, which would have rendered his ſervitude happier than Pharaoh's royalty: Or, ſhould the ſword of the tyrant have taken away his life, he would have found the ſtroke a bleſſed releaſe to a ſtate of complete and eternal glory: But our ſouls, in this ſtate of miſery, are enſlaved to Satan and to ſin; we were incapable of ſpiritual pleaſure; we were loſt to all future hope, till Jeſus Chriſt appeared, and ſeaſonably came to break off the iron yoke of bondage.

2. We may infer, That ſince God in Chriſt has wrought out ſo great ſalvation for us, if we apply not to it, we are left intirely inexcuſable. Had ſome hard matter been propoſed to us, ſhould we not have done it? Had the terms of ſalvation been more numerous and difficult than they are, would it not, think

ye,

ye, have been our intereſt to accept? but, it is certain, that the more gracious the propoſals are, the baſer and more criminal will the refuſal be. It had been better for you who neglect this ſalvation, that ſome hard things had been propoſed to you; yea, rather that nothing at all: for by neglecting this offer, you ſin againſt the deareſt love, which will be rewarded with redoubled puniſhment. To you is the word of this ſalvation ſent; and, if you refuſe it, to you will the wrath of God be ſent.

3. From what has been ſaid it is inferable, That though this is the caſe, you muſt not lie idle, as if ſince ſo much was done for you, nothing is left for you to do. This is a wrong notion; for though God has contrived your ſalvation, and Chriſt has purchaſed it, and the holy Ghoſt undertaken to apply it, yet you muſt uſe the means which God has appointed for that purpoſe. The grace of God gives no plea to licentiouſneſs, or indolence, or careleſſneſs about your ſalvation: No, ſays the apoſtle, Phil. ii. 12. "Work out your ſal-" vation with fear and trembling."

4. Allow me to exhort you to mind this ſalvation. I am ſorry, though obliged to ſay, that the greateſt part of mankind deal with their ſalvation as if it was a matter of great indifference. What is the reaſon of this? Is there any thing in your ſalvation you do not think worth your attention? There are only

three

three things which we have reason to neglect as unworthy our pains: Such as are mean; such as are uncertain, and will not recompense your pains; and such as our interest are not concerned in.

1. Is your eternal welfare too mean an employ for you? Have you such a low opinion of your immortal soul, as to think its concerns are unworthy your attention? Man is naturally proud and full of himself; and I should think, if he was allowed to conceive a high opinion of himself, or, if pride was allowed in any instance, it would be in this. Therefore, I hope, you do not think it too mean for your notice.

2. Are these things so uncertain, that they are not for a wise man to be solicitous about? How unreasonable is this? Ask the greatest miser concerning his riches, and, I suppose, he will be constrained to answer, that they are uncertain, and yet he never discontinues the pursuit of them, with the greatest keenness. Why then will you neglect your salvation, when you have better evidence of its certainty? Why will you charge your salvation with uncertainty? Has the inexpressible love of the Father, the inconceivable sufferings of the Son, and the miraculous assistance and descent of the holy Ghost no more impressions upon you, than to leave you uncertain of a future state? Judge seriously, according to the reason of things, and you will find the interests

intereſts of a life to come are far more certain, as well as more deſireable, than thoſe of a preſent life.

3. Is your intereſt no way concerned in theſe things? A queſtion as abſurd as it would be to aſk a perſon whether he would chuſe to live in an eternal felicity or unchangeable miſery. Take care in time; the ſword of juſtice is waved round your defenceleſs heads, and pointed at your naked breaſts? the houſe of your body is on fire: There is only one way by which you can eſcape; therefore come at that way, leſt it be ſhut up, and your ſoul be burnt out. The veſſel of your body is ſtaved upon the rocks of ſin, there is only one plank, one anchor ſure and ſtedfaſt; take that immediately, otherwiſe you will ſuffer ſhipwreck, and periſh for ever. Therefore, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will you die?" Amen.

THE END.

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